RULEBOOK
GAME DESIGN by RICHARD GARFIELD

KEYFORGE
CALL OF THE ARCHONS

VERSION 1.5 - NOVEMBER, 2019

- Updates and changes from are highlighted in Red.
- New Rules added to the Glossary
- New Frequently Asked Questions

KEYFORGE
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STARTER SET COMPONENTS

The components included in a *KeyForge: Call of the Archons* starter set are pictured here for identification purposes.

WELCOME TO THE CRUCIBLE...

You are an Archon. Hailed by some as a god, respected by others for your wisdom, you were born—or perhaps created—on the Crucible, a world in which anything is possible.

The Crucible is ancient, but ever renewed. An artificial planet hanging in the center of the universe, the Crucible's many layers remain constantly under construction by the enigmatic and mischievous Architects. For raw materials, the Architects have harvested countless worlds, blending them into a new whole both familiar and alien to the creatures that dwell there.

Whether lone specimens or entire cultures, the beings brought to the Crucible find themselves in a strange wonderland with no obvious means of returning to their former homes. Some thrive, building new societies and developing new technologies with the aid of the mysterious psychic substance known as Æmber. Some discard the trappings of their old lives, adopting the ways and customs of new tribes discovered in this new world. Others devolve, bodies and minds twisted beyond all recognition, incorporating Æmber into their very bodies.

As an Archon, you have gathered followers in your journeys throughout the Crucible, allies who find value in your ageless wisdom and your ability to speak to all creatures. With the aid of these allies, you seek out Vaults hidden throughout the Crucible by the cryptic Architects. Each Vault can only be unlocked by Æmber-forged keys. Once open, a Vault's contents—the power and knowledge of the Architects—can be consumed by only a single Archon.

When two Archons discover a Vault, only one can gain its knowledge. Only one can move one step closer to the secret of the Crucible…

OVERVIEW

KeyForge is a two-player card game in which each player takes the role of an Archon, and leads that Archon's deck against their opponent.

A player's deck represents a team that is attempting to gain Æmber and forge keys. The first player to gather three keys is able to unlock a Vault and win the game.

The defining feature of *KeyForge* is that no two decks are alike. This is not a trading card game—you cannot craft a deck. Rather, each deck must remain as it is. Every deck in existence is unique!

USING THIS DOCUMENT

If you have never played a game of *KeyForge* before, start by using the Quickstart document included in the starter set to learn the basics of the game.

After playing a game using the Quickstart, players can read the full rules in this document and learn more about the *KeyForge* setting.

In addition to rules and setting information, this document includes a Glossary of important game concepts and terminology that will be useful while interpreting card abilities.

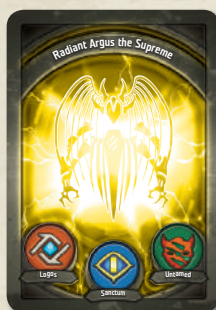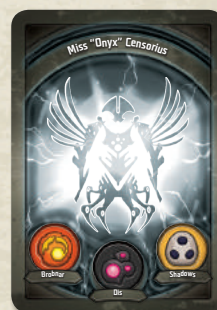*22 Damage Tokens*

26 Æmber Tokens

Radiant Argus the Supreme Starter Deck

Miss "Onyx" Censorius Starter Deck

6 Key Tokens

This creature gets +1 Power.

+1 Power

10 Power Status Cards

When this creature is used, it does nothing other than discard all stun counters on it.
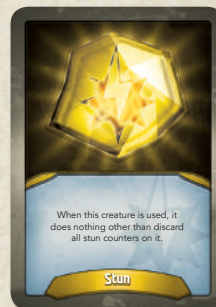
Stun

10 Stun Status Cards

2 Unique KeyForge Archon Decks

Chain Tracker						
24	23	22	21	20	19	**-4** CARDS
18	17	16	15	14	13	**-3** CARDS
12	11	10	9	8	7	**-2** CARDS
6	5	4	3	2	1	**-1** CARD

2 Chain Tracker Cards and Tokens

KEY CONCEPTS

This section introduces a number of foundational concepts to keep in mind while playing the game.

THE GOLDEN RULE

If the text of a card directly contradicts the text of the rules, the text of the card takes precedence.

OBJECTIVE

During the game, players use their cards to collect Æmber. Players use Æmber to forge keys. The game ends immediately when a player forges their third key, and that player wins the game.

READY AND EXHAUSTED

Cards that are in play exist in one of two states.

Ready cards are oriented upright so that their text may be read from left to right. A ready card can be used during a player's turn, causing it to exhaust.

Exhausted cards are rotated 90 degrees to the side. An exhausted card is not able to be used until it is readied by a game step or card ability.

All creatures and artifacts enter play exhausted.

Ready   Exhausted

RUNNING OUT OF TOKENS OR STATUS CARDS

There is no limit to the number of damage tokens, Æmber tokens, or status cards that can be in the game area at a given time. If there is a shortage of the provided tokens or status cards, other tokens, counters, or coins may be used to track the game state.

GAME SETUP

To set up the game, perform the following steps, in order:

1. Place all damage tokens, Æmber tokens, and status cards in a common supply within easy reach of both players.

2. Each player places their identity card to the left or right side of their play area.

3. Each player places three key tokens, one of each color, with the unforged side faceup near their identity card.

4. Randomly determine who is the first player. That player takes the first turn when the game begins. (If players are playing a series of games between two decks, in each game after the first, the player who used the deck that was defeated in the previous game chooses who is the first player.)

5. Each player shuffles their deck and offers it to the opponent for additional shuffling and/or a final cut.

6. The first player draws a **starting hand of seven cards**. The other player draws a **starting hand of six cards**.

7. Each player, starting with the first player, has one opportunity to **mulligan** their starting hand by shuffling it back into their deck and drawing a new starting hand with one fewer card in it. (This step is skipped in the Quickstart game.)

The game is now ready to begin.

SUGGESTED PLAY AREA (MID-GAME)

Common Supply

Opponent's Play Area

Status Cards

Battleline

Forged Key

Æmber

Discard Pile

Deck

Artifact

Identity Card

Unforged Keys

TURN SEQUENCE

The game is played over a series of turns. Players alternate taking turns until one player wins the game.

Each turn consists of five steps:

1. Forge a key.
2. Choose a house.
3. Play, discard, and use cards of the chosen house.
4. Ready cards.
5. Draw cards.

The player taking a turn is referred to as the **active player.** The active player is the only player that can perform actions or make decisions; a player does not make any decisions when it is not their turn.

Each step is described in the following sections.

STEP 1: FORGE A KEY

If the active player has enough Æmber to forge a key during this step, they must do so. To forge a key, the active player spends Æmber from the Æmber pool on their identity card, returning it to the common supply. Then, that player flips any one of their key tokens over to its forged side, indicating that the key has been forged.

- **The default cost to forge a key is six Æmber.** Some card abilities may increase or decrease this number.

- No more than one key can be forged during this step each turn, even if the active player has enough Æmber to forge multiple keys.

- Some cards have effects that allow Æmber on these cards to be spent when forging keys. If there is enough Æmber on cards with this

effect you control combined with the Æmber in your Æmber pool to forge a key you must do so during Step 1.

STEP 2: CHOOSE A HOUSE

Each *KeyForge* deck is composed of three different houses, which are shown on the identity card. During this step, the active player chooses one of the houses on their identity card to activate, making it the **active house** for the remainder of the turn. This active house determines which cards the active player can play, discard from their hand, and use this turn.

- After choosing a house, the active player has the option to take all cards in their archives and add them to their hand. (See "Archives" in the Glossary.)

- If a player controls a card that does not belong to one of the three houses on their identity card, they may (if they desire) choose and activate that house during this step instead of one of the three houses in their deck.

- A player cannot choose to activate a house unless it is either on their identity card or they control a card that belongs to that house. If a card effect instructs a player that they must activate a house other than one in the aforementioned categories, that card effect is ignored (See Cannot VS Must/May.)

STEP 3: PLAY, DISCARD, AND USE CARDS OF THE CHOSEN HOUSE

The active player may play or discard any number of cards of the active house from their hand and may use any number of cards of the active house that are in play under their control. Eligible cards may be played, used, or discarded in any order.

A card's house is determined by an icon in the upper-left corner. If the active house corresponds to a card's icon, that card is eligible to be played, used, or discarded.

Rules for playing, discarding, and using cards are described later.

- **First Turn Rule**: During the first player's first turn of the game, that player cannot play or discard more than one card from their hand. Card effects can modify this rule.
- The active player may not play, use, or discard cards that aren't of the active house unless specified by a card ability.

A Brobnar Card

HOUSES

Brobnar Dis Logos Mars

Sanctum Saurian Shadows Star Alliance Untamed

STEP 4: READY CARDS

The active player readies each of their exhausted cards.

STEP 5: DRAW CARDS

The active player draws cards from the top of their deck until they have six cards in their hand. After a player completes this step, their turn ends.

- If the active player has more than six cards in hand, they do not discard down to six.
- If a player needs to draw cards (during this step or at any other time) and cannot because their deck is empty, that player shuffles their discard pile to reset their deck, and then continues to draw (cards are drawn one at a time).
- When a player's turn ends, if that player has enough Æmber in their pool to afford a key, the player announces "Check!" so that their opponent knows the forging of a key at the start of that player's next turn is imminent.

PLAYING CARDS

The active player is permitted to play any number of cards that belong to the active house during step three of their turn.

ÆMBER BONUS

Many cards in the game have an Æmber bonus below the house icon. When a card with an Æmber bonus is played, the first thing the active player does is gain that much Æmber. Each time a player gains Æmber (for any reason), the Æmber is placed in that player's Æmber pool (on their identity card).

Æmber Bonus

PLAY ABILITIES

Some cards have a bold "**Play:**" ability. Such abilities resolve after the card's Æmber bonus is collected, if it has any, and after the card enters play.

CARD TYPES

There are four types of cards in the game: action cards, artifacts, creatures, and upgrades. There are different rules describing how each card type is played.

ACTION CARDS

When an action card is played, the active player resolves the card's "**Play:**" ability and, after resolving as much of the ability as possible, places the card in their discard pile.

Warsong
ACTION
Play: For the remainder of the turn, gain 1 each time a friendly creature fights.

Gauntlet of Command
ARTIFACT
ITEM
Action: Ready and fight with a friendly creature. *(That creature may be from any house.)*
"I said 'take me to your leader' and got a fist to the face." – Captain Val Jericho

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts enter play exhausted and are placed in a row in front of the player but behind that player's battleline, which is explained on the next page. Artifacts remain in play from turn to turn.

CREATURES

Creatures enter play exhausted and are placed in the front row of the active player's play area. This row is referred to as the battleline. Creatures remain in play from turn to turn, and they each have power and armor values that they use to resolve fights, which are described later.

Power Value →   ← Armor Value

Creature

Each time a creature enters play, it must be placed on a flank—at the far left or the far right of its controller's battleline. Each time a creature leaves play, shift the battleline inward to close the gap.

Left Flank →   ← Right Flank
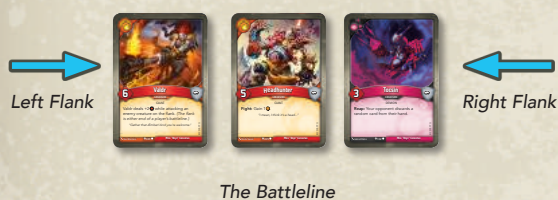
The Battleline

Creatures enter play on the flank of the battleline.

If a creature leaves play, the battleline is shifted inward.

UPGRADES

Upgrades enter play attached to (i.e., partially overlapped by) a creature chosen by the player who controls the upgrade. Each upgrade remains in play from turn to turn and modifies the card to which it is attached.

- If the card to which an upgrade is attached leaves play, the upgrade is discarded.
- If an upgrade cannot attach to a card in play, the upgrade cannot enter play.

The Protect the Weak upgrade is attached to the creature, Quixo the "Adventurer."

DISCARDING CARDS

The active player can discard from their hand any number of cards from the active house during step three of their turn. Cards are discarded one at a time, at any point throughout this step. This lets players remove cards that they do not want to play from their hand, freeing up space to draw more cards at the end of the turn.

USING CARDS

The active player can use any number of cards from the active house that they have in play during step three of their turn. Depending on a card's type, the active player is able to do different things when using that card.

UPGRADES

An upgrade modifies the creature it is attached to and is not used independently of that creature.

USING ARTIFACTS

There are two types of abilities that enable a player to use an artifact: "**Action:**" abilities and "**Omni:**" abilities.

- When a player uses an artifact, they exhaust the card and then resolve its abilities.
- A player can only use an "**Action:**" ability if it is on a card that belongs to the active house.
- A player can resolve an "**Omni:**" ability even if it is on a card that does **not** belong to the active house.
- Some artifacts require that they be sacrificed as part of the cost of using them. When an artifact is sacrificed, it is placed in its owner's discard pile. A player must still exhaust such an artifact when using it.
- Artifacts cannot be used to reap or to fight.

USING CREATURES

When a player uses a creature, that player must exhaust the creature, and the player has the option to reap, fight, trigger the creature's "**Action:**" ability, or trigger the creature's "**Omni:**" ability. Any card effect that causes a creature to fight, reap, trigger its "**Action:**" ability, or to trigger it's "**Omni**:" ability is causing that creature to be used.

REAP

Any ready creature of the active house may reap. When a creature is used to reap, the creature exhausts and its controller gains 1 Æmber for their Æmber pool. Then, all "**Reap:**" abilities the creature has, if it has any, resolve.
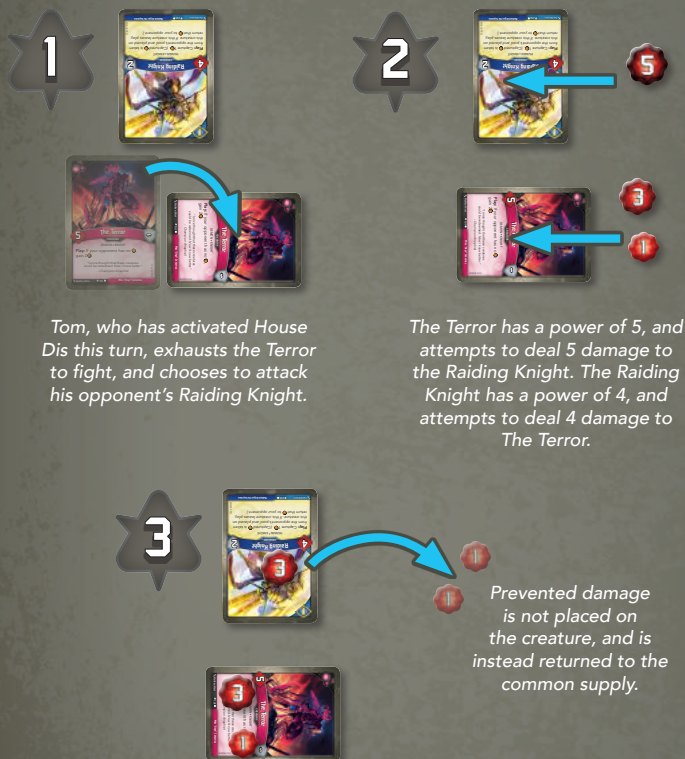
FIGHT

Any ready creature of the active house may fight. When a creature is used to fight, the creature exhausts and its controller chooses one eligible creature controlled by the opponent as the target of the attack. Each of the two creatures deals an amount of damage equal to its power (the value to the left of the card's title) to the other creature. All of this damage is dealt simultaneously. After the fight resolves, if the creature that is being used to fight survives, all "**Fight:**" abilities the creature has, if it has any, resolve.

A creature cannot fight if there is no enemy creature that can be chosen as the target of the attack.

ACTION

Any ready creature of the active house may trigger its "Action:" ability, if it has one. When a creature is used to trigger its "**Action:**" ability, the creature exhausts and that "**Action:**" ability resolves.

COMBAT EXAMPLE

Tom, who has activated House Dis this turn, exhausts the Terror to fight, and chooses to attack his opponent's Raiding Knight.

The Terror has a power of 5, and attempts to deal 5 damage to the Raiding Knight. The Raiding Knight has a power of 4, and attempts to deal 4 damage to The Terror.

Prevented damage is not placed on the creature, and is instead returned to the common supply.

The Raiding Knight has 2 armor, so 2 of the damage assigned to it is prevented. 3 damage is placed on the Raiding Knight, and 4 damage is placed on The Terror.

OMNI

Any ready creature may trigger its "Omni:" ability, if it has one, even if it does **not** belong to the active house. When a creature is used to trigger its "**Omni:**" ability, the creature exhausts and that "**Omni:**" ability resolves.

DAMAGE AND ARMOR

When a creature is dealt damage, place an amount of damage tokens equal to the amount of damage dealt on the creature. If a creature has as much or more damage on it as it has power, the creature is destroyed and placed on top of its owner's discard pile. If a creature has an armor value (to the right of the card's title), the armor prevents that much incoming damage each turn. (For more details, see "Armor" in the Glossary.)

- When a creature leaves play, any Æmber on that creature is gained by the opponent. (See "Capture" in the Glossary.)

CARD ABILITIES

Unless otherwise specified by the ability, the active player makes all decisions while resolving an ability.

For details on specific terminology that can be found in card ability text, see the Glossary.

RESOLVE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

While resolving a card ability, resolve as much of the ability as can be resolved, and ignore any parts of the ability that cannot be resolved.

Example: Aaron plays the card Anger (COTA 001), that reads "**Play**: Ready and fight with a friendly creature.", and chooses his friendly Snufflegator (COTA 358) to resolve the ability on. However, the Snufflegator is already ready, so Aaron ignores that part of the ability and just uses his friendly Snufflegator to fight.

USING CARDS VIA OTHER CARD ABILITIES

If a card ability allows a player to play or use another card (or to fight or to reap with a card), the chosen card may belong to any house unless the ability specifically states otherwise.

- When using a card via a card ability, any other requirements of using the card (such as exhausting to reap, fight, or resolve its "**Action:**" ability) must be observed, or the card cannot be used.

- Players can only use cards they control, unless a card ability specifically states otherwise.

THE RULE OF SIX

Occasionally, a situation may emerge in which, through a combination of abilities, the same card may be played or used repeatedly during the same turn. A player cannot **play and/or use** the same card and/or other copies of that card (by title) more than **six times** during a given turn.

CONSTANT ABILITIES

If a card has an ability that does not have a boldfaced precursor, the ability is a constant ability that is active so long as the card remains in play and meets all conditions specified by the ability.

- Constant abilities on a card are active even while that card is exhausted.

- Applying the effects of a constant ability is not considered *using* a card and therefore does not cause the card to exhaust.

The game text on Mother is an example of a constant ability.

CHAINS

Chains represent supernatural bindings that are occasionally placed onto specific Archons by the Architects: sometimes in an effort to better challenge the Archon to grow and overcome greater adversity, and other times to penalize the Archon for breaking a rule or a piece of Crucible etiquette.

A player may gain chains through card abilities during a game. When a player gains chains, that player increases their chain tracker by the number of chains gained.

Number of Chains

Draw Modifier

Each time (including during setup) a player with one or more chains would draw one or more cards to refill their hand, that player draws fewer cards (based on their current chain level, see below) and then sheds one chain by reducing their chain tracker by one.

The more chains a player has, the greater the card penalty becomes.

Chains 1–6: draw 1 fewer card.
Chains 7–12: draw 2 fewer cards.
Chains 13–18: draw 3 fewer cards.
Chains 19–24: draw 4 fewer cards.

Example: *Tori has been assigned seven chains. During setup, Tori will draw two fewer cards and shed a chain. Then, the next six times Tori refills her hand, she will draw up to five cards and shed another chain. After all of her chains have been shed, Tori will draw to the standard hand size.*

CHAIN HANDICAPS (OPTIONAL)

When playing a game between a weaker deck and a stronger deck, players may use chains as a means to handicap the stronger deck. Chains are used when players want a fair game between two known decks rather than a potentially unfair competition between decks that aren't known. When playing with new decks, or competing in a tournament, players will not use this handicap.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSIGNING CHAINS

When the players have a sense that a particular deck is stronger than the opposing deck, start it with four chains. From then on, every time the chained deck wins three games in a row against that opposing deck, adjust the number of chains up by one, and if it loses three games in a row, adjust the number of chains down by one.

As a player plays more games with their collection, the number of chains assigned to a deck will fluctuate up and down based on the matchup and how well the deck has performed against the opposing deck.

CHAIN BIDDING

If players are reasonably familiar with two decks they can ignore the suggested number of chains, and instead bid a number of chains for the right to use a particular deck.

Example: *Terry and Julie decide to play Mother Mahospot against Chancellor Fisher. Mother Mahospot is a deck that both players are very familiar with, feel is quite strong, and enjoy playing. Chancellor Fisher is a newer deck, that the players are not as comfortable playing. The above guidelines suggest they begin with four chains on Mother Mahospot. Julie looks at Fisher, considers a moment, and says, "I'll play Mother Mahospot at five." Terry raises to six. Julie goes to seven. Terry decides to let her play it at seven, and plays Chancellor Fisher.*

WHAT'S NEXT

You are now familiar with the basic rules of the game. The next section of this book contains a Glossary of advanced concepts that can be referenced while playing or interpreting card abilities.

An introduction to the *KeyForge* setting, with two short stories and an introduction to each of the houses in the game, can be found on page 15.

GLOSSARY

This Glossary includes a number of concepts and terms players may encounter while playing the game, in alphabetical order. Instead of reading this section from beginning to end, players are encouraged to only look up new concepts as they are encountered during play.

ABILITY, CARD ABILITY

An ability is the special game text a card contributes to the game.

Unless an ability explicitly references an out-of-play area (such as a hand, deck, archives, or discard pile), that ability can only interact with cards that are in play. Abilities that interact with a card after it is destroyed can interact with that card while it is in the discard pile.

Abilities on a creature, artifact, or upgrade are only active (and can only be triggered) while that card is in play, unless the ability explicitly references being used from an out-of-play area.

ACTION ABILITY

To use an "**Action:**" ability during their turn, the active player must exhaust the card. The ability then resolves.

ACTIVE HOUSE

The active house is the house that the active player has chosen for the current turn.

ACTIVE PLAYER

The active player is the player taking the current turn. The active player makes all necessary decisions for all card abilities or timing conflicts that need to resolve during their turn.

ADJACENT

When a creature card refers to a game element as being "adjacent" to that creature or being played "adjacent" to that creature, it is referring to a card being in or being played into the position to the immediate right or immediate left of that creature.

See also "Neighboring"

ALPHA

When a card has the Alpha keyword, it can only be played if you haven't played, used, or discarded any other cards during the current step of your turn.

ÆMBER

Æmber is tracked by Æmber tokens, and is used to forge keys.

Only Æmber in your own Æmber pool is considered "yours" for the purpose of card effects.

See also: Capture, Keys, Reap, Steal.

Æmber Token

ANOMALY

This symbol indicates that a card is an anomaly card. An anomaly card is an extremely rare card that is a preview of possible future sets of KeyForge. An anomaly card may appear in any house, and is treated as belonging to that house for all game purposes.

ARCHIVES

A player's archives is a facedown game area in front of that player's identity card. Card abilities are the only means by which a player is permitted to add cards to their archives. During step 2 of a player's turn, after they select an active house, the active player is permitted to pick up all cards in their archives and add those cards to their hand.

Cards in a player's archives are considered out of play.

A player may look at their archives at any time. A player is not permitted to look at an opponent's archives.

If the ability instructing a player to archive a card does not specify where the card is archived from, the archived card comes from that player's hand.

ARMOR

Some creatures have an armor value to the right of the card title. Armor prevents an amount of damage equal to the armor value that the creature would take each turn. Armor prevents damage before it is actually dealt. For example, if a creature has two armor and is dealt one damage, that damage is instead prevented by the armor, leaving the creature with one armor that can prevent damage left for the rest of the turn. If the creature is later dealt three more damage during that turn, one damage is prevented and the other two damage are dealt to that creature.

If a creature gains armor, the gains are additive and accumulate on top of the creature's printed armor value.

If a creature gains armor during a turn, the gained armor does not prevent damage already dealt that turn. If a creature loses armor during a turn, it is not retroactively dealt damage that was already prevented by the armor.

If a creature loses any amount of armor, it loses armor that has been used to prevent damage this turn before it loses armor that has not been used to prevent damage this turn.

If a creature has a "~" symbol in its armor field, the creature has no armor. Such creatures may gain armor through card effects.

AS IF IT WERE YOURS/AS IF YOU CONTROLLED IT

If a card effect instructs you to use a card "as if it were yours" or "as if you controlled it," it causes you to use the card even if you don't control it. You never gain control of the card during this process, but you resolve the effect as if you controlled the card.

When using a card "as if it were yours/as if you controlled it" that instructs you to sacrifice the card as part of the effect, the card is still sacrificed as if you controlled it.

ASSAULT (X)

When a creature with the assault (X) keyword attacks, it deals damage equal to its assault value (i.e., "X") to the creature it is fighting before the fight resolves. (The active player chooses whether this occurs before or after other "Before Fight" effects and keywords.) If this damage destroys the other creature, the rest of the fight does not occur.

If a creature with the assault (X) keyword gains another instance of the assault (X) keyword, the two X values are added together.

ATTACK, ATTACKER, ATTACKING

See "Fight" on page 11.

BATTLELINE

The battleline is the ordered line of creatures a player controls in play. See "Creatures" on page 6.

BEFORE

If the word "before" is used in an ability (for example, "**Before Reap:**" or "**Before Fight:**"), that ability resolves before resolving the game effect of the reap or fight (but after the card exhausts, if exhausting is required to use the card).

CANNOT VS MUST/MAY, CANNOT VS PERMISSIVE

If two card effects are simultaneously instructing a player that they "cannot" do something and that they "must" or "may" do the same thing, the "cannot" effect takes precedence.

> **Example**: Anna controls a Pitlord (COTA 093) which reads "While Pitlord is in play you must choose

Dis as your active house." On their next turn Anna's opponent plays *Restringuntus (COTA 094)* which reads "**Play**: *Choose a house. Your opponent cannot choose that house as their active house until Restringuntus leaves play."* and chooses Dis for its ability. On Anna's next turn, she both must and cannot choose Dis, but because cannot takes precedence over must, she only cannot choose Dis and must choose one of her other houses instead.

If two card effects are simultaneously instructing a player that they cannot do something and that they may do something, the "cannot" effect takes precedence.

CAPTURE

Captured Æmber is taken from an opponent's Æmber pool and placed on a creature controlled by the capturing player. Players may not spend captured Æmber.

When a creature with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is placed in the opponent's Æmber pool.

Unless otherwise specified, Æmber is placed on the creature that captured it.

CENTER OF THE BATTLELINE

A creature is in the center of the battleline when there are an equal number of creatures to both that creature's left and right side.

There is only a center of a battleline if there is an odd number of creatures in that battleline. When there is an even number of creatures in a battleline, there is no center. If there is only one creature in the battleline that creature is in the center.

CHAIN, CHAINS

Some card abilities cause a player to gain one or more chains. If a player gains chains, that player increases their chain tracker by the number of chains gained.

If a player has at least one chain when refilling their hand and would draw cards based on the number of remaining cards in their hand, they draw fewer cards according to the chart below. Then, they shed one chain by reducing the number on their chain tracker by one.

Chains 1-6: draw one fewer card.
Chains 7-12: draw two fewer cards.
Chains 13-18: draw three fewer cards.
Chains 19-24: draw four fewer cards.

While drawing an initial hand of cards during setup, if a deck has chains assigned to it, the chains also apply to the initial hand of cards drawn as if you were refilling a hand during step 5. A chain is shed for this initial draw as per the standard rules.

See "Chains" on page 8.

CONTROL

A player owns the cards that begin the game in their deck. When a card is played, it enters play under the control of the active player.

A player can take control of an opponent's card. When this happens, that card is placed in the new controller's play area. If it is a creature, it is placed on a flank of the new controller's battleline. If multiple effects that take control of a card are used on the same card, the most recent effect takes precedence.

If a player takes control of a card that belongs to a house not in the new controller's deck, they can make that house the active house during step 2 of their turn.

If a card that has changed control leaves play for any reason, it moves to its owner's appropriate out-of-play zone.

If an ability refers to cards that a player "has" in play, it is referring to cards that player controls.

COST, AT CURRENT COST

The base cost to forge a key is six Æmber. This cost may be modified by card abilities. The modified cost is referred to as the current cost.

DAMAGE

Damage a creature has taken is tracked by placing damage tokens on the creature. If a creature has an amount of damage on it equal to or greater than its power, the creature is destroyed. Damage on a creature does not reduce its power. If multiple creatures are damaged by a single effect, that damage is dealt simultaneously.

For more details on damage and combat, see page 7.

DEPLOY

A creature with the deploy keyword does not need to be played on the flank of its controller's battleline. Instead, when it is played it can be placed anywhere in its controller's battleline, including between two other creatures.

DESTROYED

When a card is destroyed by a card effect or when a creature has damage on it equal to or greater than its power, that card is tagged for destruction. After it is tagged, then that card's "**Destroyed:**" abilities trigger, and finally the tagged card is placed into its owner's discard pile. If multiple cards are simultaneously tagged for destruction, the active player chooses the order in which to resolve the "**Destroyed:**" abilities of any of those cards, and also chooses the order in which those cards are placed in their owner's discard piles.

Once a creature has been tagged for destruction, the only thing that can remove this tag is a replacement effect that uses the word "instead" and replaces the destruction of that creature. An effect that heals a tagged creature does not remove the destroyed tag. An effect may move a tagged creature to a different out-of-play area (such as the hand or archives), but that creature is still considered to have been "destroyed" for the purposes of card effects.

If a "**Destroyed:**" ability causes more cards to be destroyed, they are also tagged for destruction, and their "**Destroyed:**" effects will also trigger before cards are placed in the discard pile.

Players cannot choose to sacrifice or destroy a creature that is already tagged for destruction. A card that is already tagged for destruction cannot be tagged for destruction again, and any effect that attempts to destroy or sacrifice that card fails. That card still only triggers its "**Destroyed:**" abilities once.

A card only triggers "**Destroyed:**" abilities that it had at the time it was tagged for destruction. If a card gains a "**Destroyed:**" ability after it is already tagged, that ability does not trigger.

Cards that are sacrificed also count as being destroyed. They are tagged for destruction following the same process outlined above.

Example: *Dan has Archimedes in the middle of 4 other creatures and his opponent plays Gateway to Dis, destroying all creatures. First, all of Dan's creatures are tagged for destruction. Then Archimedes' neighbors "Destroyed:" effects trigger, archiving them. The battleline immediately collapses, but Archimedes' new neighbors have already been tagged for destruction and cannot gain a new "Destroyed:" ability, so they are placed in the discard pile along with Archimedes.*

Example: *Emily has a Jehu the Bureaucrat, Duma the Martyr with 2 damage, and Commander Remiel with 1 damage in play. Her opponent plays a Poison Wave, dealing 2 damage to each creature. This damage causes Duma the Martyr and Commander Remiel to be tagged for destruction. Duma the Martyr's "Destroyed:" effect triggers, healing Jehu the Bureaucrat and Commander Remiel. Since Commander Remiel was already tagged for destruction, it still goes to the discard pile with Duma the Martyr, but Jehu the Bureaucrat survives unscathed.*

Example: *Marcus has a Groggins with a Phoenix Heart in play. His opponent, Janelle, has a Dust Imp with a Soulkeeper, a Drumble, and a Shaffles in play. Marcus attacks Dust Imp with Groggins, causing Dust Imp to be tagged for destruction. Dust Imp's "Destroyed:" ability and the "Destroyed:" ability that Soulkeeper grants it both trigger simultaneously. Marcus chooses to let his opponent gain the 2 Æmber first,*

then trigger the Soulkeeper, which will destroy Marcus's most powerful creature—Groggins. When Groggins is tagged for destruction, the Phoenix Heart attached to it triggers, returning Groggins to Marcus's hand and dealing 3 damage to each other creature. This damage then tags Drumble and Shaffles for destruction. Finally, all the destroyed creatures still in play (Dust Imp, Drumble, and Shaffles) are placed in their owner's discard pile in the order of the active player (Marcus's) choice.

DISCARD PILE

When a card is destroyed or discarded, it is placed on top of its owner's discard pile. The cards in each player's discard pile are open information, and may be referenced at any time.

The order of cards in a player's discard pile is maintained during play, unless a card ability causes this order to change.

When a player runs out of cards in their deck and are required to draw, they shuffle their discard pile to create a new deck.

ELUSIVE

The first time a creature with the elusive keyword is attacked each turn, it is dealt no damage and deals no damage to the attacker in the fight.

Elusive only stops damage that would be dealt by each creature's power; damage dealt by keywords or other abilities still applies.

END OF TURN

End of turn effects are resolved when a player's turn is over—after step 5, the "Draw Cards" step.

ENEMY

If a card ability refers to an "enemy" game element, it refers to an element currently controlled by the opponent.

ENRAGE

When a creature becomes enraged, place an enrage status counter on it. When a creature with an enrage counter on it is used, it must be used to fight, if able. After a creature with an enrage counter on it is used to fight, remove all enrage counters from it.

While a creature has an enrage counter on it, it cannot be enraged again.

EXALT

When an effect instructs you to "exalt" a creature, take 1 Æmber from the common supply and place it on that creature.

Note: When a creature with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is placed in the opponent's Æmber pool.

FIGHT

When a player uses a creature to fight, the player exhausts the creature and chooses an opponent's creature. Both creatures deal an amount of damage equal to their power value to the opposing creature in the fight, and both are "fighting" for the purposes of card effects.

A creature used to fight is said to be "attacking" and can be referred to as "the attacker" during that fight.

If the attacker is not destroyed, all "**Fight:**" abilities on the attacking creature then resolve. If *either* creature in a fight has a constant ability referencing the end of the fight (*example: "after an enemy creature is destroyed fighting this creature…"*), the creature must survive the fight to resolve the ability. Only the attacker can trigger "**Fight:**" abilities.

"FIGHT WITH"

If an ability instructs a player to "fight with" or "ready and fight with" a creature, the ability is granting the player permission to use the designated creature to fight. The fight is resolved following the standard rules for fighting, against a creature controlled by the opponent.

FLANK

The creatures on the far right and far left of a player's battleline are on the flanks of the line. A creature in this position is referred to as a *flank creature*. Any time a creature enters play or changes control, the active player chooses which flank of its controller's battleline it is placed on.

If a battleline only has one creature in it, that creature is on both the left and right flank and is considered a *flank creature*.

"FOR EACH"

Some abilities include an effect that uses the term "for each" to determine the magnitude of the effect. Unless otherwise specified, a player may choose to affect a different card with each instance of such an effect.

Example: *Shard of Pain reads "Play: Deal 1 damage to an enemy creature for each friendly Shard." That damage may be distributed among multiple creatures.*

Some abilities specify that a player must "choose a creature," then do an effect to that creature using the term "for each." Such abilities only affect a single creature.

Example: *Red Planet Ray Gun reads "This creature gains, "Reap: Choose a creature. Deal 1 damage to that creature for each Mars creature in play."" That damage must be dealt only to the chosen creature—it cannot be distributed among multiple creatures.*

FORGE

For details on forging keys, see page 4.

FRIENDLY

If a card ability refers to a "friendly" game element, it refers to an element currently under the control of the same player.

GRAFT

If a card ability instructs you to graft a card onto another card, the card being grafted is placed faceup under the other card. The grafted card is not considered to be in play. If the card onto which it is grafted leaves play, the grafted card is placed in its owner's discard pile.

HAUNTED

While a player has 10 or more cards in their discard pile, that player is haunted. Being haunted has no inherent game effect, but it may be referenced by card abilities.

HAZARDOUS (X)

When a creature with the hazardous X keyword is attacked, it deals X damage to the attacking creature before the fight resolves. (The active player chooses whether this occurs before or after other "Before Fight" effects and keywords.) If this damage destroys the other creature, the rest of the fight does not occur.

If a creature with the hazardous (X) keyword gains another instance of the hazardous (X) keyword, the two X values are added together.

HEAL

If an ability "heals" a creature, remove the specified amount of damage from the creature.

If an ability "fully heals" a creature, remove all damage from the creature.

Any creature can be chosen to be healed by a card effect that heals, even if it does not have any damage on it. However, if no damage is removed from the creature, it is not considered to have been "healed" for the purpose of card effects that reference healing.

HOUSE CHOICE

Each turn, a player must choose one of the three houses indicated by their identity card, if able. Some card abilities may restrict a player's

house choice.

If a player has gained control of a card that does not belong to one of their three houses, that card's house becomes an eligible choice for that player while the player retains control of the card.

If there is no legal choice of house, the player plays the turn with no active house.

If a player is faced with two (or more) "must choose" mandates, the player may choose either of those options.

"IF YOU DO" AND "IN ORDER TO"

If an ability includes the phrase "if you do" or "in order to," the player referenced by the ability must successfully and completely resolve the text that precedes that phrase before they can resolve or perform the text that follows that phrase. In other words, if the first part of the ability is not successfully and completely resolved, that which follows the phrase does not resolve or cannot be performed.

INVULNERABLE

If a creature has the invulnerable keyword, it cannot be dealt damage and cannot be destroyed.

A creature with invulnerable can leave play by means other than being destroyed, such as being purged, archived, returned to hand, or shuffled into its owner's deck.

Because a creature with invulnerable cannot be destroyed, it remains in play even if its power is 0.

KEYS

The first player to forge all three of their keys immediately wins the game.

Each player has one key of each color: red, blue, and yellow. Some card abilities may reference the color of your keys, including which of your keys are forged or unforged.

For details on forging keys, see page 4.

LASTING EFFECTS

Some card abilities create effects or conditions that affect the game for a specified period of time, such as "until the start of your next turn" or "for the remainder of the turn." These are called lasting effects.

Lasting effects are treated as constant abilities that are active for the duration specified by the effect. A lasting effect persists even if the card that created the effect leaves play.

If a lasting effect affects cards in play, it applies to all cards in play during the specified period, regardless of whether they were in play at the time the lasting effect was established.

LEGACY

This symbol indicates that a card is a legacy card. A legacy card is a rare instance of a card that has been brought forward from a previous set of KeyForge. It is legally part of the deck it is in for all game purposes, including tournament play.

LEAST POWERFUL

A reference to the "least powerful" creature refers to the creature in play with the lowest power. If there are multiple creatures that qualify, each is considered "least powerful."

If an ability requires the selection of a single least powerful creature, and multiple creatures are tied, the active player chooses one.

Groups of "Least Powerful"

If a card effect refers to a group of "the X least powerful" creatures, it is referring to a number of creatures in play that have an equal or lower power than every creature that does not belong to that group. If there are not enough creatures with the lowest power to fulfill the group, then a creature with the next lowest power is eligible to be considered a part of the group. This continues until

the group has been filled or there are no creatures remaining. If at any point multiple creatures are tied at the same power that could qualify them for the group, but there is not enough space in the group for each tied creature, the active player chooses which of the tied creatures are part of the group.

LEAVES PLAY

If a card that is in play leaves play (is returned to hand or deck, destroyed, discarded, archived, or purged), all non-Æmber tokens and status cards on the card are removed, all upgrades on the card are discarded, and all lasting effects applied to the card expire.

When a card moves from an in–play zone to an out-of-play zone in which the identities of cards are hidden from the opponent (such as a player's hand, deck, or archives), any pending effects that are currently or about to interact with that card no longer do so, unless a card effect explicitly states that it interacts with that zone.

If a creature with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is placed in the opponent's Æmber pool. If a non-creature card with Æmber on it leaves play, the Æmber is returned to the general token pool.

When a card leaves play it is always put into its owner's appropriate out-of-play zone, unless a card effect explicitly states that it interacts with that zone.

MAVERICK

This symbol indicates that a card is a maverick. A maverick is an extremely rare instance of a card that has left its standard house and is now a part of a new house. For all game purposes, treat a maverick as belonging to the house printed on its graphic template.

MAY

If an ability includes the word "may," the text that follows "may" is optional. If a player chooses to resolve a "may" ability, the player must resolve as much of the ability as they are able.

MOST POWERFUL

A reference to the "most powerful" creature refers to the creature in play with the highest power. If there are multiple creatures that qualify, each is considered "most powerful."

If an ability requires the selection of a single most powerful creature, and multiple creatures are tied, the active player chooses among the tied creatures.

Groups of "Most Powerful"

If a card effect refers to a group of "the X most powerful" creatures, it is referring to a number of creatures in play that have an equal or higher power than every creature that does not belong to that group. If there are not enough creatures with the highest power to fulfill the group, then a creature with the next highest power is eligible to be considered a part of the group. This continues until the group has been filled or there are no creatures remaining. If at any point multiple creatures are tied at the same power that could qualify them for the group, but there is not enough space in the group for each tied creature, the active player chooses which of the tied creatures are part of the group.

Example: Tom plays the action card "Three Fates (COTA 071) which reads, "**Play**: Destroy the 3 most powerful creatures." In play there is an 8 power creature, a 7 power creature, and two 5 power creatures. Tom must select 3 creatures to fill the group and must choose the 8 power creature as the first creature for the group. There are no other creatures in play that are tied for most powerful. In order to fill the group the next most powerful creature is selected, the 7 power creature. After this creature is selected, again there is no creature in play that is tied at 7 power, so a creature from the next highest power must be selected. Tom thus must choose one of the

5 power creatures to complete the group.

MOVE

When a card instructs you to move Æmber, take that Æmber off of that card/location and move it to another card/location. This does not count as capturing, stealing, or losing Æmber.

When a card instructs you to move damage, take that damage off of one card and place it on to another card. This does not count as damaging the second card, and is not prevented by armor or other effects that prevent damage.

When a card instructs you to move a creature, that creature must remain under its current controller's control unless the card also specifies that a different player is taking control of that creature.

MULLIGAN

During setup, each player, starting with the first player, has one opportunity to mulligan their starting hand. This is done by shuffling the starting hand back into the deck and drawing a new starting hand with one fewer card in it.

After a player chooses to mulligan, that player must keep the new starting hand.

If a player is using a deck that has chains applied to it at the start of the game and takes a mulligan, they do not shed a chain from the mulligan, but do draw one fewer card than they had before the mulligan as per the normal mulligan rules.

NEIGHBOR

The creatures to the immediate left and right of a creature in a player's battleline are its neighbors.

OMEGA

After a card with the Omega keyword is played, the current step of the game ends. The active player cannot play, use, or discard any more cards for the remainder of the step. Any pending effects and triggers complete their resolution, then play continues to the next step.

OMNI

The active player may trigger any "**Omni:**" abilities under their control during any of their turns, even if the card with the "**Omni:**" ability does not belong to the active house. When a player uses a creature to trigger its "**Omni**:" ability, the player exhausts the creature and then resolves the "**Omni**:" ability.

OFF HOUSE

An off house card is any card that belongs to a house that is not the active house.

OPPOSING

When a creature is involved in a fight (either because it was used to fight, or because it was attacked by another creature), the other creature in the fight is the opposing creature.

OTHER COUNTERS

Some cards may refer to counters that do not have official components to represent them. Players can use any available resources to represent these counters such as coins, slips of paper, or even poker chips. These counters have no inherent rules, instead the card that creates them provides context to how the counters function.

LIST OF COUNTER TYPES:
- Doom Counters
- Disruption Counters
- Fuse Counters
- Glory Counters
- Growth Counters

PAY

If a player must pay Æmber to an opponent, the Æmber is removed from the paying player's pool and added to the opponent's pool.

PLAY

When a card has a "**Play:**" ability, the effect occurs any time the card is played. For creatures, artifacts, and upgrades, the ability resolves after the card enters play. For action cards, the ability resolves, and then the card is immediately placed in its owner's discard pile.

If an ability "plays" a card from a source other than hand, "**Play:**" abilities on the card resolve. If an ability "puts" a card "into play," "**Play:**" abilities on the card do not resolve.

POISON

Any damage dealt via the power of a creature with the poison keyword during a fight destroys the damaged creature. This occurs when the damage is successfully applied to the opposing creature.

Poison has no effect if all of the damage is prevented by armor or prevented by another ability—poison only resolves when one or more damage is successfully dealt.

Poison refers only to damage that would be dealt by the creature's power, not by damage that is dealt by keywords or other card abilities.

POWER COUNTER +1, POWER STATUS CARD

When a creature is given a "+1 power counter," one such status card is placed on the creature. For each of these cards that is on a creature, that creature's power is increased by one.

PRECEDING, REPEAT THE PRECEDING

If card text instructs players to repeat a preceding effect, the entirety of the effect before the text providing the instruction to repeat resolves again.

Note: Repeating an effect does not interact with the Rule of Six (see page 7), as the Rule of Six only applies to playing or using cards, not triggering their effect multiple times.

PURGE

When a card is purged, it is removed from the game and placed faceup beneath its owner's identity card. Purged cards no longer interact with the game state in any manner.

RARITY

A card's rarity symbol can be found at the bottom of the card, near the collector number. A card's rarity (common, uncommon, rare, or special) is used by the deck-generation algorithm to determine how frequently it will appear in decks. Special cards have a different type of distribution and do not obey the game's standard rarity rules.

○ *Common* ☆ *Rare*

◇ *Uncommon* ◈ *Special*

REAP

When a player uses a creature to reap, the player exhausts the creature, gains 1 Æmber for their Æmber pool, and then all "**Reap:**" abilities on the creature resolve.

REPEAT

If card text instructs players to repeat an effect, the entirety of the effect resolves again including the text to repeat the effect. If the card that is creating a repeating effect is removed from play, the effect can no longer repeat.

Note: Repeating an effect does not interact

with the Rule of Six (see page 7,) as the Rule of Six only applies to playing or using cards, not triggering their effect multiple times.

See also "Preceding."

REPLACEMENT EFFECTS

Some abilities completely replace the resolution of another effect or game step. These abilities are referred to as "Replacement Effects" and can be identified by use of the word "instead." A replacement effect specifies what part of an effect or game step it is replacing. When that effect (or part of an effect) or game step would occur, it does not occur and the replacement effect happens in its place.

If a replacement effect causes something that is being destroyed to not be destroyed, this removes the destroyed tag from it. The replacement effect remains as a lasting effect while any destroyed abilities are triggering and does not fully resolve until the card would be put into the discard pile.

If no effect is specified by the replacement effect, it refers to another part of the same effect the replacement effect is a part of.

Example: *Aaron plays Dimension Door, and then reaps with a creature. Normally Aaron would gain 1 Æmber from reaping with the creature. However, the Dimension Door has set up a replacement effect that replaces the gaining of an Æmber from reaping with stealing an Æmber, so Aaron steals 1 instead.*

Example: *Katherine has a Commander Remiel with an Armageddon Cloak attached to it, and her opponent plays Gateway to Dis, destroying each creature in play. The destroyed effect given to Remiel by the Armageddon Cloak is a replacement effect that is replacing the destruction of the creature. This destruction is being replaced with healing the creature fully and destroying the Armageddon Cloak instead. This causes the destroyed tag to be removed from Commander Remiel and be given to the Armageddon Cloak.*

Example: *Jamie plays Ronnie Wristclocks while her opponent has 7 Æmber. Normally, Ronnie Wristclocks's play effect steals 1 Æmber from her opponent, but since Jamie's opponent has 7 or more Æmber, the replacement effect kicks in and replaces stealing 1 Æmber with stealing 2 Æmber instead.*

RETURN

When captured Æmber is returned, it is placed in the opponent's Æmber pool.

SACRIFICE

When a player is instructed to sacrifice a card, that player must discard that card from play.

When a card is sacrificed, that card is considered to have been destroyed, and any "**Destroyed:**" abilities the card has resolve.

A player cannot sacrifice a card they do not control.

SEARCH

When a player searches a game area (such as a deck), that player looks at all the cards in the specified area without showing those cards to the opponent. A player may choose to fail to find the object of a search.

If an entire deck is searched, the deck must be adequately shuffled upon completion of the search.

If a discard pile is searched, the cards are kept in the same order.

SELF-REFERENTIAL TEXT

If a card's ability refers to its own title, that reference is only to itself and not to other copies of the card.

SKIRMISH

When a creature with the skirmish keyword is used to fight, it takes no damage from the opposing creature when the damage from the fight

is dealt.

This applies only to damage that would be dealt by the opposing creature's power, not by damage that is dealt by keywords or other card abilities.

SPLASH

When an ability deals damage to a creature "with splash damage," the splash damage is dealt to each of the target creature's neighbors.

STEAL

When an ability steals Æmber, the stolen Æmber is removed from the opponent's Æmber pool and added to the Æmber pool of the player resolving the steal ability.

If an ability steals more Æmber than a player has remaining in their pool, the ability steals only the amount remaining in the pool.

STUN, STUN STATUS CARD

When a creature becomes stunned, place a stun status card on it. While a creature is stunned, it cannot fight, reap, or use action or omni abilities.

A stunned, ready creature of the active house can be used by exhausting it to remove its stun status card.

If a card effect would cause a stunned creature to fight, reap, or use an action or omni ability, instead that creature is exhausted and the stun status card is removed.

Constant abilities and abilities that do not require the creature to reap, fight, or be used are still active.

If a stunned creature is attacked, it still deals damage to the attacking creature during the fight.

While a creature is stunned, it cannot have another stun status card placed on it. If an effect attempts to stun a stunned creature that effect does not stun the already stunned creature.

SWAP

If two game elements are swapped, they exchange places with one another.

When two creatures are swapped, they exchange positions. This means that each takes the position in the battleline of the other. The two creatures swapped must always be controlled by the same player.

If cards from two distinct game areas are swapped (such as a card in play and a card in hand), the cards switch game areas.

TAUNT

If a creature has the taunt keyword, any of its neighbors that do not have the taunt keyword cannot be attacked by an enemy creature that is being used to fight.

In the battleline, taunt creatures are slid slightly forward to indicate their presence to the opponent.

Champion Anaphiel (center) has the taunt keyword, and is pushed slightly forward in the battleline.

"THIS WAY"

If an ability refers to an effect that occurred "this way," it is referring to an effect that was produced by the same resolution of that same ability.

TIDE

The tide is a mechanic from a potential future expansion. The tide is not in play at the start of the game, Future card abilities may cause the tide to change, but currently there are no such abilities in the game.

TURN

A turn consists of one player performing the five steps detailed in the game's turn sequence, which are:

1 Forge a key.
2 Choose a house.
3 Play, discard, and use cards of the chosen house.
4 Ready cards.
5 Draw cards.

TRAITS

Traits are descriptive attributes (such as "Knight" or "Specter") that may be referenced by other cards. Traits are listed at the top center of a card's text box.

Traits have no inherent game effect, but may be referenced by card abilities.

UNFORGE

If a previously forged key is "unforged," flip the key token to its unforged side. The key no longer counts toward its controller's victory condition and must be forged again to win the game.

USE

See "Using Cards" on page 6.

WARD

When a creature becomes warded, place a ward status counter on it. If a creature with a ward counter on it would be damaged or leave play, instead discard each ward counter on it. (**Note**: This prevents the creature from being tagged for destruction.)

While a creature has a ward counter on it, it cannot be warded again.

THE LUCKY SIDE

by Daniel Lovat Clark

Dodger raced up the knife-edge of the crystal spur and ran himself right out of room. Behind, an angry mountain of scales, teeth, and hate—ahead a fall to certain death. So Dodger hurled himself out into Luck-knew-what, felt his hands catch on a rough tangle of razorwhip vines, and swung himself out and up as the crystal shattered behind him.

The toothy thing behind him let out a roar so loud that Dodger'd swear it gave his swing just the fling it needed to land him on the far side of the ravine. He teetered on that edge, saw the glimmering spears of the crystal canyon below, the grand sweep of the golden plains beyond, the shining swamp, the shadow of the Sanctum above, till he finally tottered off his teeter onto the Lucky side of things.

Safe. For a moment.

He took a deep breath and fiddled with his damn cloak. It was out of Æmber. No fading into the shadows for Dodger, not now anyhow. "Ah, it's no fun when it's easy anyway," he muttered, glancing down into the ravine. The teeth with legs—too many legs—had scrambled down the cliff face and reared up, snuffling the sky with its scaly serpentine snout.

"What did you do, tiny?" Valdr's voice boomed with laughter as she stepped to the edge of the cliff, watching the beast scrabble forward. Dodger looked up, and up, and up, two or three Dodgers high to where the Brobnar giant's head was haloed by the sun far above.

He flashed his best grin, his getting-out-of-trouble grin, his teeth white in the shadows of his inky-dark face, like a flashing knife in the shadows proper.

"Well its spines are Æmber, ain't they?" said Dodger, flicking one purple-black finger to where the crystalline spines piercing through its scales glowed with a blood-red light in the gloom of the ravine. "And herself needs Æmber, she said."

"And you've brought it straight to us," Valdr said as the thing began climbing the rock wall toward them, all scrabble and snarl. "How thoughtful." She lifted her rocket-hammer and thumbed the catch, waking the engine that grumble-mumbled within its massive steel head. She frowned as Dodger slipped behind her, all innocence, ma'am. "What is it, do you know?"

"Well, it's a snufflegator, ain't it," said Dodger.

"So you don't know," Valdr replied. As the snufflegator streaked over the edge of the cliff, teeth-and-roar first, she brought her hammer down, a thunderbolt on its skull, bang! It twitched once, then lay still. "Gather that Æmber," Valdr said, turning to go. "And you're welcome."

Dodger giggled and extended his wrist-knife as he crouched by the thing's dead head. Maybe he could skim a little Æmber off the top, recharge his cloak, spare a little for his guild back home? The Archon would never miss it, would she, wouldn't grudge Dodger a little taste of the honey in the pot? He dug at the first spine, feeling it warm and singing beneath his touch. But before he could decide whether to slip it into a hidden pocket or not, she was there: Miss "Onyx" Censorius, the Archon herself, leaning over him, as curious and beautiful and impossible as ever.

"Uh, hullo, m'lady," Dodger managed, placing the Æmber spine on the ground next to him and starting on the next and never dreaming of taking a little of his own out, not faithful Dodger, no. "Plenty of good Æmber here. Should be more'n enough to forge you one of them keys you was asking for."

"Yes," she said. "But the material alone isn't enough, Dodger. Courage is what makes this key." She reached out one perfect finger to touch the broken beast's broken snout. Dodger wondered what the others saw when they looked at her, at Onyx. To him, she was a vision, an elf like him but yet unlike, taller, radiant with light. Breath-taking, in the literal sense. She had some of the strength of Valdr's Brobnar giants, too, powerful arms, broad shoulders…but the same dispassionate, terrible focus of the worst of the demons of Dis. When she looked at him, Dodger wasn't certain if he was a bug on a pin in her collection, or her best earner, or her next meal.

He realized she was still talking. "And for Courage, we must first have Fear." She stood, gathering up the last of Dodger's Æmber spines, then tucked one into the inside pocket of his coat. "Be brave, Dodger. For me?" She smiled and Dodger nodded, dumbstruck.

"Brave about what?" he wondered, as the first of the snufflegator's starving children squirmed free from its body, teeth-first…

THE CRUCIBLE

"I got a pretty good look as the Quantum was breaking apart on approach. A massive planet, an unfinished shell above, and that world-piercing, impossible spire. And above even that, behind us—I think even from space, we may have been inside the thing."

— Captain Val Jericho, United Stars Starship Quantum

"The Mintaran grub-ant has no concept that it is inside a terrarium, no awareness of the world outside. Some days, I wonder if I'm the grub-ant."

— Quixo the "Adventurer"

The massive world at the heart of the universe. The melting-pot, where ten thousand times ten thousand worlds meld together, aliens and AIs and ancient societies thrust together in unexpected ways. They call it the Crucible.

No one knows when it was built, save to say "long, long ago." No one knows who built it, except to say "the Architects." And no one knows its purpose, unless it is truly only what it seems: a place to bring parts of every planet, every species, every culture in the galaxy together.

From the surface, it seems like any other planet. It has gravity (sometimes more, sometimes less), an atmosphere (sometimes breathable, sometimes toxic). Plants, animals, mineral formations, ruins of civilizations gone by—to walk on the Crucible is to explore not just one alien world, but all of them. From the floating cities of the Sanctum to the crystal forests of the Æmberwood, from the towering shoulders of Sleeping Giant Mountain to the quicksilver pools of Arygrum Bog, from the windswept red plains of Nova Hellas to the bottomless canyons of Echoing Deep, there is no end to the wonders the Crucible has to offer.

And the people! From a hundred thousand worlds and a hundred million cultures, all living shoulder-to-shoulder-to-tentacle across the Crucible. Whether in roving bands or quiet villages or bustling cities, towering fortresses or serene temples, merchants or brigands or kings or scientists, the people! With so many different species and cultures living side-by-side, the old nations and empires of the homeworlds are gone—mostly. The elves of the Shadows or the Brobnar tribes might still keep their own communities aloof, but they also walk the streets of the Crucible's many cities, just like everyone else. The Martian Empire might be a bunch of conquering xenophobes, but their people still slip away to catch the latest Rolling Bugs concert just like everyone else. The innumerable houses of the Crucible, many of them rose up on the Crucible itself, but even the ones that came from a homeworld, like the Shadows, now count aliens among their number. The Crucible changes everyone, given enough time.

If nothing else, it changes your perspective. Because above it all rises the Spire, that impossible tower that rises from the pole and climbs to space. And from the spire spreads, what? An unfinished layer of the Crucible? A mighty spaceport, reserved for the use of the Architects? Who can guess? But stare into the clear blue sky long enough, and you'll swear you see the trusses and scaffolding of a world under construction. The Crucible, impossible and gigantic and artificial, and ever growing, ever evolving.

ARCHONS

"To a shy lad from a tiny village, it was like an angel had come down to walk among us. I was right, in a way, and yet terribly, terribly wrong."

— Commander Remiel, Knight of the Sanctum

"You look at us and think: you are as unto a god, but we look at you and think: this marvelous being is something I can never truly understand. We are all here to learn from one another, whether in peace or in conflict. That must be the Crucible's purpose."

— Miss "Onyx" Censorius, Archon

Life on the Crucible came from elsewhere. This is widely understood, widely acknowledged. Disparate worlds, mashed together and nudged along by the robotic fairies that most assume are creations of the Architects, all kept in some sort of balance. Then what is unique to the Crucible?

The answer seems to be the archons. Child gods, or manifestations of a central AI, or transcended mortals, or beings of pure energy. No one knows. The archons themselves don't know or won't tell. But they travel across the Crucible, studying the people and animals they find, always eager to learn more about their surroundings.

The archons are strange beings, difficult for mere mortals to understand. They have bodies only when they choose to, existing at other times as a disembodied consciousness or glowing energy being. The only trait that they all seem to share is their ability to speak to all sentient beings. Otherwise, they are as diverse in appearance and character as the Crucible itself.

Archons commonly seek out companions for their journeys, and they are always on the lookout for the mysterious vaults of the Crucible, secret caches of wisdom, power, or understanding that only the archons can access. To open a vault, archons must contest with one another in a race to gather the necessary æmber and forge the keys the vault requires. This contest has elements of a sacred ritual, a sporting event, and a bareknuckle back-alley brawl, all mixed together. The exchanges almost inevitably turn violent, but deaths are rare. In fact, thanks to the advanced technology and unusual abilities available to archons, most such contests are advantageous to their followers. When the archons successfully open a vault, they find within a treasure trove of wisdom, technology, and some undefinable energy that the archons absorb directly. Aside from this unique energy, the spoils of the vault are commonly shared with the archon's followers—a powerful incentive to join an archon's company.

For some, the promise of such treasure is reason enough to follow an archon into danger, but others have nobler intentions. Traveling with an archon is always exciting, a never-ending cavalcade of the unexpected. On the Crucible, "exciting" is often synonymous with "deadly," but archons can possess powers and abilities to keep their followers (relatively) safe, from healing powers to the gift of foresight. If nothing else, the archon's gift of tongues can let their followers meet peaceably with other tribes and nations with whom they would otherwise have no way to communicate. Archons of a more warlike bent may attract followers who wish to keep their communities safe, or who relish the chance to lash out against enemies known and unknown. There's always someone willing to risk everything in service to such a powerful and enigmatic being.

And when the archons open enough vaults and move on, to wherever it is archons go, their followers are usually left better off for the experience. And only rarely suddenly abandoned deep in a hostile part of the Crucible where they will surely meet their doom.

KEYS

I helped Miss Onyx forge her third key. It…did not go the way I thought. I knew it would be made of æmber, that much I got right, but I thought we would place it on my forge, strike a few blows with the hammer, get the shape of the stuff just so, and that would be that. But her ladyship couldn't have been less interested in what it looked like.

She took the æmber, still glowing-hot, from my tongs. "This will do," she said. "Now, we must teach this key to experience joy. What brings you joy, Valdr?"

I thought about that for a minute. "Those fluff pastries Dodger found in the last village," I said.

"Those were delicious," Miss Onyx agreed. "Let's see if Dodger has any left."

THE HOUSES OF THE CRUCIBLE

This section introduces the houses of the Crucible that players might encounter during play. Additional houses may reveal themselves in the future.

BROBNAR

Whether they're descending from snowy mountaintops to raid, riding grumbling motorsteeds across the blasted wastes, or laughing in the rain on the stormy seas, the warclans of the Brobnar are always a fearsome sight. A varied people, each Brobnar warclan is ruled by the strongest—whether that strength is shown on the field of battle, in the Champion's Ring, or demonstrated by sheer force of personality and brilliance.

Although the oral traditions of the giants describe a journey from the mythical land of Vanhalla, most scholars believe that the Brobnar culture as it exists today was created on the Crucible, perhaps through a merger of the early giants and the first goblin tribes they encountered. Through the centuries, the Brobnar have evolved their own unique identity, independent of any of the member tribes they have absorbed.

First, the Brobnar value strength above all. In Brobnar society, each is entitled only to what their strength allows them to take, and an opponent or rival without the strength to defend their property has no claim to it. Second, Brobnar are very conscious of their image and the projection of strength—to be seen as weak is the same as being weak. Third, the Brobnar love loud music, strong alcohol, and shiny things.

To the rest of the Crucible, the Brobnar are dangerous enemies and valuable allies. Some warclans extract tribute from their neighbors, and others hire themselves off as mercenaries. Many Brobnar spend time living with other peoples, showing off Brobnar strength and learning (sometimes painfully) about life on the Crucible. Every now and again, one learns the most valuable lesson of all: that as strong as they are apart, every giant, goblin, or other creature is stronger working together…and when this happens, the whole Crucible trembles!

SOCIETY

Most Brobnar are giants, powerful humanoid creatures nearly 3 meters tall with mottled skin in a variety of shades. They tend to wear their hair in brightly-colored crests, with long beards for those who care to grow them, and adorn themselves with tattoos and sigils of their clan. The Gargantes clan, for example, decorates their bodies with blue tattoos to celebrate their escape from the Ice-Maze of the Robo-Sorcerer. (The Gargantes treasure horde also features the Skull of the Sorcerer, which looks almost exactly like a tin can.)

Long ago, a large population of small, clever goblins joined the Brobnar people. They are mostly relegated to second-class, servant status due to their small size and perceived weakness, but goblins are a tough gritty breed, and a handful of them have risen as respected leaders and shamans even among the giants.

The Brobnar, on the whole, will accept anyone into their clans, so long as that person is strong-willed and eager to fight!

TECHNOLOGY

Although they seem brutish and simple to some more civilized peoples, Brobnar are great proponents of any technology that is loud, destructive, or preferably both. A violent people prone to injury and misadventure, they make widespread use of cybernetic replacements and augmentation. They favor weapons that allow them to engage their enemies directly and revel in their great strength, but even their axes, hammers, and smashing gauntlets are often enhanced with engines, rockets, and other innovations that make them louder and more powerful. (Also, in many cases, more dangerous to the user, but Brobnar don't usually mind that.) Since they value strength, they use their æmber as a source of power for certain machines, or even adorn their bodies with it to make themselves stronger.

Brobnar goods are individually hand-made by artisans, with minimal existing industrial infrastructure. As such, they are made to last and an artisan whose products are durable, beautiful, and noisy can be as esteemed as any warrior. Brobnar also have a keen eye (and ear) for beauty…by Brobnar standards. Others may find their art and music to be, mainly, "loud."

ARCHONS

Brobnar are an intensely physical people and find the more ethereal nature of the archons puzzling. If an archon wants the respect of the Brobnar, they must manifest physically and then display strength of either will or body, neither of which is generally difficult for archons. Once they have proven themselves, archons find that the Brobnar are loyal and excellent companions, jovial and direct. Many archons with Brobnar allies find themselves wearing physical bodies more and more often, enjoying the simple and universal pleasures of such a form.

DIS

There are stories told across the Crucible of terrible monsters that dwell in the space between worlds. These creatures burst forth from the ground to terrify innocent people, their capering imps stealing æmber and their powerful demons destroying any who would oppose them. Those unlucky or foolish enough to travel to their netherworld home, known as Dis, are never heard from again.

The half-living demons, the stories continue, are creatures of the between-worlds and so they have no life, no pain, no joy to call their own. Instead, they must steal these things from the innocent people of the Crucible. They seek out the most extreme emotions and consume them for sustenance. Where there is great rage, there lurks a demon, stoking the fires of animosity and harvesting the emotions, the very soul, of the wrathful being. Greed, fear, suffering—all these emotions, the demons cause in mortal folk in order to harvest them and return them to their evil lairs.

The Theorists of Logos deride such tales as superstitious folly, and explain that the demons are merely parasitic beings that make their home in the suprastructure of the Crucible that divides this layer from the one below it. Emotionally numb due to the lack of stimulus in this space, the "demons" use the psycho-reactive properties of æmber to capture emotional and mental imprints of other residents of the Crucible, returning them to Dis for later study or perhaps recreational experience.

The fact that these theories are exactly the same as the "superstitious" stories with fancier words is one those same Theorists dismiss as hooey, repeating the exact same explanation, only slower.

SOCIETY

The demons of Dis are, despite the myths, creatures of flesh and blood, or at least skin (or insectile chitin) and ichor, in addition to the techno-logical nightmare-horror of their many cybernetic augmentations. It is not clear whether all demons are of the same species beneath their cryptic masks, or whether demonhood is bestowed upon various creatures through some sinister process. Volunteers to study the question are, understandably, in short supply.

The demons are served by imps, chaotic and often mischievous robotic beings, driven by an intelligence scarcely less frightening than their demonic masters.

The less said of humans who join the faction willingly, the better.

TECHNOLOGY

Dis machines are part sorcery and part high technology, and the demons infuse æmber into every facet of their devices so that they, too, can capture the emotions of their victims. The furnaces of Dis burn with intense heat, where their black iron is smelted, and "souls" (or imprinted emotions) are broken down into their core elements for demonic consumption. These same blasted æmber shards are then incorporated into the imps and other self-aware machines used by the demons, and sent out to gather more æmber and more souls.

Even when not functionally required, Dis devices tend to have sharp edges, a scalding touch, spikes, and a host of other opportunities for the unwary to injure themselves.

ARCHONS

Archons are the only beings on the Crucible who can be said to truly communicate with the demons of Dis, and many of them find the demons endlessly fascinating. Dis's devotion to the extremes of sensation and emotion may be particularly attractive to archons who struggle with empathizing with the mortal condition—some archons have even requested the demons introduce them personally to the concepts of pain and fear.

LOGOS

The self-proclaimed "foremost" intellectuals and scholars on the Crucible are all found within the Society of Logic and Reason, or simply Logos. Any Logotarian would happily confirm this fact if asked, or if not asked, or if given any opportunity to speak at all.

Logos has devoted itself to the advancement of scientific knowledge and understanding, putting aside as many earthly (or at least fleshly) concerns as it can manage through use of its advanced technology. Individual Logotarians often replace some or all of their bodies with machines over the years, allowing them to escape the distractions of a physical form, and continue their work long after sickness or death would otherwise claim them. In fact, the use of cybernetic bodies is so widespread that no one outside the Society can recall what the physical bodies of the original Logotarians looked like, or even if they came to the Crucible in their cybernetic forms to begin with. Logos itself remains silent on the matter.

While some call Logos's zealous commitment to advancing knowledge at any cost unethical, and describe some of their more inventive experiments as "deranged," "catastrophic," or "really very bad," true Theorists scoff at such backward thinking. They understand that the secrets of the Crucible are far more important than the lives of any one individual or city, and that no progress was ever made without a few naked singularity pinhole events warping local spacetime.

SOCIETY

Logos divides itself, in very broad terms, into two groups: Theorists and Mechanists. Each considers the other to be their intellectual inferior, and each is convinced that the most important contributions to science and technology have been made thanks to their efforts.

Theorists concern themselves with the realm of pure reason and possibility, where new theories are constantly developed in an effort to decode the secrets of the universe, both as it is and as it might be. Anything that can be demonstrated through math and reason is seen as potentially true; everything else is to be regarded with suspicion and attacked rigorously until a theoretical model is found. Mechanists, on the other hand, deal with empirical data and the world as-it-is. A theory is useless if it cannot be tested, and a technology is unproven until it is built and shown to work.

Logos is happy to accept brilliant members of all species into its ranks; after all, few of them keep their organic bodies for more than a century or two anyway.

TECHNOLOGY

Logos technology is among the most advanced on the Crucible, and it is incorporated into every phase of their lives—indeed, it is rare to find a Logotarian who doesn't have Logos technology built into their bodies. Whether it's mag-tethered floating limbs (for easy modularity) or a quantum dissonance modulator (for…reasons), Logos machines are built for every conceivable purpose and also for some that aren't.

Because Logos is continually pushing the frontier of knowledge, many of their technologies are experimental or prototypical; some are never replicated because they do not work as well as desired (or work entirely too well in the wrong way). Some of these "machines" may have originated as organic beings—there is minimal ethics oversight on the experiments of the Logotarians.

Many Logotarian machines incorporate æmber into their function, either as a power source or to harness some of its more esoteric properties. Others are designed expressly to investigate and analyze æmber, a project which has remained stubbornly difficult no matter how advanced Logos's science becomes.

ARCHONS

For Logos, archons are one of the ultimate unsolved puzzles of the Crucible. They eagerly study archons and are happy to work with them to learn more of their nature. Since archons are also generally curious about their own nature, many join in Logos's quest for knowledge.

MARS

Mars, as an empire, is exceptional in that it has remained a more-or-less unchanged political and cultural bloc after its relocation to the Crucible by the Architects two centuries ago. Perhaps due to the fact that the transition occurred during the final days of the Fall of Mars, or perhaps simply based on Mars' relative-newcomer status, the Martian Empire has remained intact on the Crucible. It is still under the control of the Martian Elders and still aggressively dominating as much of the Crucible as they can manage in their xenophobic crusade to ensure that Mars Lives On.

Now powered by æmber, rather than the cavorite that poisoned their home planet, Mars's war machine has found some success, but also more difficult and dangerous foes than they could have expected. New life forms on the Crucible mean more opportunities for Martian biological engineers to breed a perfect monster. New elements, such as æmber, provide more fodder for Martian scientists and engineers. But Martian soldiers with their ray guns and Martian vehicles with their blasters are not always victorious when pitted against Brobnar warriors or swarms of Niffle apes. For Mars to have true victory, they must reclaim the skies with their flying saucers. Unfortunately, they have had only limited success in rebuilding the Martian fleet, and some mysterious force keeps their spaceships from rising above the atmosphere.

Still, by maintaining large cloning facilities and dropping their soldiers into combat from hovering motherships, the relatively weak (in a physical sense) Martians have established themselves in Nova Hellas, and now control three entire cities. Tremble before the might of Mars!

SOCIETY

Unlike many other factions on the Crucible, Mars remains committed to genetic and cultural purity, that Mars may never die. Even before their translocation to the Crucible, Mars was using genetic enhancement technology and extensive cloning to divide their culture into two distinct castes: the taller, more intelligent Elders, who rule over the smaller, weaker, and far more numerous Martian Soldiers.

While the Soldier caste are expected to display utter loyalty to Mars and are discouraged (sometimes with cranial electro-correction) from developing unique personalities, Elders are varied in their areas of expertise and interest, and have considerable leeway to indulge their personal desires. Some develop new biological weapons (whether plagues or horrifying monsters), some study the lesser beings and the Crucible, others archive Martian culture and history. Together, the Elders collectively rule the Martian Empire—all for the glory of Mars!

TECHNOLOGY

Martian technology was highly advanced when they were translocated to the Crucible and, despite needing to completely re-invent itself for its new context, has only become more sophisticated since. Martian soldiers go to war armed with powerful and mysterious weapons and piloting highly advanced, lethal walkers and ships, while genetically-modified monstrosities are turned loose as a vanguard, hopefully against the enemies of Mars. (Perhaps unsurprisingly, most Martian technologies are either purpose-built for war, or soon turned to that purpose.)

While Mars once relied on cavorite to power its rayguns and levitate its flying saucers, it has found a suitable substitute in the æmber found only on the Crucible. The psycho-reactive æmber seems to have unlocked the psychic potential of the Martian race, and new experiments in mind control, telepathy, and other psionic technologies promise great things for the Martian future.

ARCHONS

To the Elders of Mars, archons are both potential threat and ally. Their wisdom and power is undeniable, but they carry with them an undeniable potential to corrupt Martian purity with their foreign ideas and companions. Still, the threat is acceptable when the payoff is so high, and so the Elders tolerate fraternization with the archons (not that they have much of a choice). For their part, archons seldom get a chance to explore a society that has remained so wholly itself. And of course the gleeful belligerence of the Martian war machine is attractive in its own way.

SANCTUM

Floating as if by magic above the surface of the Crucible are many large islands, improbable paradises of water, stone, and green growing things. Some believe that these islands are but the beginnings of a new layer of the Crucible, to be assembled by the Architects over the following millennia; others speculate that this new layer is already under construction and these islands must be leftovers from that process.

In any case, many of these islands are governed by and collectively referred to as the Sanctum. A theocratic nation-state unified by their gnostic faith and protected by the angelic Knights of the Sanctum (as well as various other knightly and crusading orders), the Sanctum is safe, clean, and pleasant, which is a rare combination for any realm on the Crucible. Wherever the golden wings of their knights spread, the innocent and just can rest easy, knowing that they are protected by the Church of the Opened Eye. (The definitions of the terms "innocent" and "just", of course, are determined by the Church itself.)

The bulk of the Sanctum's flesh-and-blood adherents are human beings, but certainly the Church of the Opened Eye does not have its origins on the human homeworld. It's possible that the Sanctum and their faith were both created on the Crucible, perhaps in imitation of the archons with which early adherents must have been familiar. If the scholars and Grey Monks know, they are not sharing those secrets with the unenlightened.

Although they are sometimes literally above earthly concerns, the Sanctum has regular communication with the world below. Missionaries, ambassadors, and even merchants walk through the streets of the Crucible's villages and cities, or even travel to wild and inhospitable places to bring the Sanctum's truth to the unenlightened. Usually, these travelers are welcomed, and when they are not, well, that's what the Knights are for.

SOCIETY

The religion of the Sanctum teaches that through meditation, learning, and spiritual growth, a being can become enlightened and transcend their need for an earthly body. Many of the knights and the higher-ranking clergy are spiritual beings of pure energy; indeed, the mighty suits of powered armor worn by the knights are necessary containment devices for their spiritual selves, who otherwise could not affect the physical world at all. The gleaming wings and golden swords wielded by the knights to such impressive effect are the spiritual (some might say "psychic") projections of the believer's will, made possible by use of the sacred æmber, and further evidence of the divine and spiritual nature of all beings.

Most of Sanctum's spirits can only manifest in the hallowed halls of their cathedrals or through the sacred armor of the knights. The most powerful spirits of the Sanctum, called "angels," are no longer bound by such limitations, and seem to manifest their selves and will directly as beings of shining golden luminosity.

There are still many creatures of flesh and blood within the Sanctum's ranks, however. Enlightenment is not found easily, and for many is more about the journey than the destination. Some even profess that Sanctum's spirits were always energy beings and that Enlightenment and Transcendence are impossible, a scam that has been propagated throughout the ages to oppress the masses, but such heretics are swiftly silenced within the Sanctum itself.

TECHNOLOGY

Sanctum's signature technology is the glorious armor of its knights, powerful cybernetic suits that make flesh-and-blood wearers stronger, healthier, and faster, and enable great feats on the part of knightly spirits.

Much of Sanctum's technology relies on the "spiritual energy" of its user, and æmber is incorporated to act as a conduit. For the knights, this energy is often channelled into wings and halos of golden light, which give the warriors superior mobility and tactical awareness on the battlefield. Their weapons, too, are enhanced by golden energy, creating blades of pure light, shields that pulse with power, and other effects that reflect and enhance a knight's purpose.

Aside from their knights, much of the Sanctum seems almost pastoral in its asceticism. The architecture is beautiful, but built with time-honored techniques that date from ages past. Records are maintained by hand and on paper, food is grown through honest toil, and in general virtue, simplicity, and peace are valued. At least for the laity; the cathedrals themselves are monuments to inner light and the glory of the Sanctum, of course, and for them no expense shall be spared.

ARCHONS

The difference between a powerful Sanctum angel and an archon seems subtle to the point of meaninglessness to most believers of the Sanctum. From the point of view of the Church, archons are everything they believe made manifest: a pure soul, a perfect consciousness free of any limitations of physical form. Sanctum knights are eager to learn from such beings, and the archons, for their part, are often eager to be looked upon, treated, and worshipped as deities. Indeed, some archons are even up to the task, and strive to enhance the spiritual lives of their followers.

SAURIANS

To say that the Saurus Rex rules over the Saurian people is an overstatement. She stands only as the first among equals in the Saurian Senate–but this still makes her one of the most powerful and important people in the Locality.

As an empire that is literally millions of years old, the Saurian Republic is possibly the oldest coherent culture on the Crucible. Although it has risen and fallen many times in its long history, the Saurians have survived and thrived over epochs.

Now, the city-states of the Saurian Republic live side-by-side with the other peoples of the Crucible, a shining example to what the Hegemonic political party calls "lesser beings." (In other words, foreigners.) Some (among the Hegemonics) may argue that the Republic is in decline, but others (such as the Sequestarians) say simply that it has outgrown its expansionistic, warmongering days. Still a strong power, the Saurians have resisted Martian aggression from Nova Hellas and broken three separate Sanctum crusades, but their days of conquest ended with the defeat of the Smilodon Barbarians.

SOCIETY

The Tribes of the Saurian Republic, including the Longusaurs, Carnisaurs, Cornifaciems, Loricadons, Herbisaurs, Volatusaurs, and Marinusaurs, trace their lineage back to dinosaurs placed on the Crucible some sixty-five million years ago. It's difficult to speak in broad terms of the Saurian people, but most females tend to be somewhat larger than the males, whereas the males tend to be somewhat more colorful than the females.

Although there's substantial variation both between and within the tribes, Saurians tend to be large and physically potent creatures by the standards of other intelligent beings of the Crucible. Even the giants of Brobnar would think twice before challenging a Longusaur to physical combat! But more than that, the Saurians pride themselves as the most advanced philosophical minds on the Crucible. Their Senatorial debates are legendary for their duration and the strength, passion, and insight of their arguments.

TECHNOLOGY

Saurian technology is so advanced that many lesser civilizations mistake it for magic. Each artifact is built to marry form and function, a beautiful and harmonious union of advanced technology and traditional designs. The spears and shields of their warriors are more potent than any crude raygun or projectile. Even their beasts of burden demonstrate superior Saurian technology, their behavior ably controlled by advanced Saurian harnesses and tack and their abilities enhanced by superior genetics and breeding programs.

ARCHONS

Archons are integrated into Saurian society in a way almost unheard-of on the Crucible. Archons are granted permission to attend meetings of the Saurian Senate by default, where it is hoped that they will learn from the great wisdom on display there. Archons of noted wisdom or erudition are welcome in the Saurian academies, and there have been a dozen or so instances of Archons serving as Governor of a city-state throughout the history of the Saurian Republic.

SHADOWS

The Svarr elves that dwell in the Shadows are a motley collection of rogues, confidence artists, thieves, and sometime-assassins. Physically unimposing, the elves make up for it with speed, cleverness, and a light-fingered approach to other people's possessions and technology.

Loosely organized into a series of like-minded guilds, the Svarr are a curious mixture of selfish and selfless. They will sacrifice much for the good of their guild, and yet ruthlessly exploit any opportunities presented by outsiders, robbing, cheating, and stealing for their own advantage without hesitation or regret.

Svarr histories hold that they once dwelled in a land of light and peace, but were exiled to the Shadows, where they were forced to hide and scavenge in order to survive. It isn't clear whether this exile predates their translocation to the Crucible or if the myth (if myth it is) is directly based on that translocation, but whatever the case they hold the story as justification for any and all misdeeds. Fortunately for the Svarr, they are extremely talented in all arts of stealth, misdirection, and repurposing other people's tools.

Many are confused by what, precisely, the Shadows are—a nation, a place, a state of mind? The Svarr are pragmatic about it: anyplace they hide, anyplace they do their business, that's the Shadows. The best thieves can find the Shadows anywhere.

SOCIETY

Most of the thieves in the Shadows are from the Svarr tribe of elves, a diminutive, dark, large-eyed people with wicked grins and sharp senses. Clannish and suspicious of outsiders, the Svarr dominate every Shadows guild. Svarr can also be found living and working alongside beings of all species in all sorts of places and under all sorts of creeds and governments. But these individuals may also be Shadows, because a good thief can blend in anywhere.

Humans and other aliens sometimes fall in with the Shadows guilds. After all, crime isn't unique to the Svarr and they'll recruit any asset that seems useful. Some of these recruits find themselves more at home in the Shadows than in their homelands, and eventually join a guild full-time, where they are, after proving themselves, as welcome as any Svarr.

TECHNOLOGY

Most Shadows technology is stolen or scavenged from someone else and then repurposed for Shadows use. Some Shadows operatives have even managed to reprogram the faeries that steward the Crucible's biospheres, using them as scouts, saboteurs, assistants, and simply as pets (they are cute, after all).

If the Shadows have one piece of technology that is uniquely theirs, it is their cloaks, clever stealth emitters that surround them with an invisibility field. Shadows elves frequently wear the distinctive three-dot stealth emitters all over their outfits for complete coverage of invisibility or illusion technology, as required. Using their cloaks, the thieves and rogues can always return to the Shadows whenever they need.

ARCHONS

The Svarr have a simple means of assessing anything that isn't of their guild: can it help, or is it a threat? Archons are clearly both, so they must be approached with care. But if one can be turned to an ally, then the dividends paid to the guild could be extreme. If nothing else, archons can apparently speak to anyone or anything, so they can help arrange deals and trades in the Shadows. Archons, who have to be introduced to the concepts of "personal property" and "ownership" by others at some point, find the Shadows interpretation of such concepts intriguing. The balance of "me first" and "anything for a mate" that defines Svarr culture is one that many archons find eminently sensible.

STAR ALLIANCE

On their continuing mission of exploration, the crew of the SAV Quantum found themselves falling through an anomalous energy field and crash-landing on the Crucible. As they struggle to survive in their new world, the scientists, explorers, and small military contingent of the Grand Star Alliance continue their mission, boldly going where no man, woman, neuter, or other-gendered-being have gone before!

Of course, everywhere they look they find men, women, neuters, and other-gendered-beings, but never let it be said that the Alliance let the facts get in the way of their sense of adventure. And the fact remains: the Star Alliance has spent decades exploring the galaxy, bringing dozens of star systems into the peaceful and democratic Alliance as they extend their scientific knowledge everywhere…and yet, they had never even heard a hint of the Crucible's existence. If they can ever get the Quantum spaceworthy again and get back in touch with Fleet Command, they will be bringing home a discovery beyond anything in the databooks.

Since crash-landing on the Crucible, the Alliance crew have built up a small city in the rocky savannah of the Valley of Time. Officially designated as "Camp One," pretty much everyone calls it by its true name: Quantum City.

SOCIETY

The Star Alliance is a polyglot, multi-species community spanning dozens of star systems. It counts at least twenty member species with full voting rights, not to mention the increasingly-intelligent robots and dozens of other species who have friendly relations with the Alliance and live among them without being full members.

The crew of the Quantum is mainly humans (from Earth and elsewhere), aided by a diverse array of robots and led by the brave Captain Val Jericho. But there are a number of aliens on Jericho's crew, many serving as high-ranking officers. For example, Science Officer Qincan is a proximan from Alpha Centauri. Proximans are renowned for their quick and agile brains and nimble fingers, although the light gravity and gentle climate of their homeworld has left them rather less hardy than other species. Security officer Lieutenant Khrkhar, however, is from a much more durable species, the handuhan. Stocky, powerful, and protected by armored plates, the handuhan are a proud species of warriors who take great joy in competition and overcoming extreme odds. The third major alien species represented on the Quantum are the insectile krxix, who despite their unsettling appearance have an overwhelmingly friendly, helpful, and self-sacrificing attitude toward their crewmates. The communal krxix hives on their homeworld are paragons of cooperation and togetherness, supporting populations that are enormous by the standards of the rest of the Alliance due to their efficiency and humble needs.

TECHNOLOGY

The Star Alliance has advanced technology, including sophisticated computers, environment suits, vehicles, robots, jet packs, ray guns, and the omni-present wrist modules that links each crew member back to the Quantum's central computer. However, despite their advanced technology, the engineers have been unable to get the Quantum functional again, and have been forced to strip out many of her subsystems to provide needed support for the growing Star Alliance camp on the Crucible. It's possible that this strange new substance, æmber, is interfering with the Quantum's systems—further study is required.

In addition to their wrist-coms, Quantum crew make use of modular attachments that they customize to the task at hand. They're supported in their mission by a variety of dedicated robots, including many that are vehicles such as the crew-favorite R0-V3R all-terrain buggy, also called an "Explo-Rover," perfect for exploring strange planets.

ARCHONS

As possibly the newest arrivals on the Crucible, the crew of the Quantum are a curiosity for the archons. Watching the Alliance explorers discover the Crucible for the first time, the archons get to see it all with fresh eyes. There's also the mystery of the Quantum's appearance to consider—were they transported accidentally, along with the planet beneath them? Did they arrive "the hard way," flying into the Crucible from outside? In either case, they may be the first such arrivals in the Crucible's history!

For their part, Captain Jericho and her crew are happy to enlist "native guides" as they set out to unlock the mysteries of the universe.

UNTAMED

The Architects brought together plants, animals, and other lifeforms from all across the universe to populate their Crucible. In fact, they continue to do so, blending together alien biomes into something, if not quite harmonious, at least verdantly and boisterously alive.

The various wild creatures of the Crucible are tended to by mechanical faeries, quirky automatons that do their best to keep a semblance of balance in place. But while they struggle to maintain this balance, the faeries make no attempt to keep the wildlife segregated, and so wolves from Earth may soon find themselves hunted by Martian snekgarrs, Niffle apes from Regulus Prime hang from the branches of the slow-blooming nepenthe tree of Visgard, and Alpha Centaurian sugar ants are consumed by Venusian flytraps. (Not to be confused with the surprisingly-similar plants from Earth.) Over time, these species evolve to find a comfortable home on the Crucible, even blending and interbreeding with aliens where they find compatible biology (sometimes aided by faeries and the strange mutations wrought by wild æmber). While some of these animals may still be recognizable as similar to the beasts on their planets of origin, others are wholly and forevermore creatures of the Crucible, and found nowhere else in the universe.

Collectively, these wild creatures are referred to as the Untamed. Together with the humans and other sentients who reject civilization and retreat to the wild, they form a large and chaotic faction of their own. With no central organization (indeed, in many cases with no true intelligence) to speak of, the only constant to the Untamed is that they live true to their natures, whatever those natures may be.

SOCIETY

Since the Untamed includes, by definition, every wild creature, plant, fungus, or other living thing on the Crucible, its diversity is impossible to overstate, but we'll try: it's very diverse. As for the sentient beings best described as "people" (of whatever species), they have more commonalities. Some were raised in civilized societies and turned away from them. Others have only ever lived in the wild. All are more comfortable under the open sky of the Crucible than in the cities of stone and steel, more able to converse with the beasts and birds than with their fellow sentients.

Some of these sentients, perhaps thanks to liberal consumption and use of æmber, have developed a near-supernatural ability to speak not only to animals, but to plants and fungus as well. Their abilities seem like magic, and many call these people "witches," or by other names drawn from their own mythologies. But they are harmless. Mostly.

TECHNOLOGY

The Untamed as a whole do not use technology, since most scholarly distinctions between sentient being and wild beast revolve around its use. Still, there is some blurriness at the edges, and while Niffle apes may be considered animals, they do fashion crude jewelry and use simple tools when appropriate. The faeries of the wilderness are all machines, as well, and there are some truly strange examples of synthetic life in the galaxy that confuse the line ever further.

Many of the sentients who might be considered Untamed have walked away from most technology, but even in the wild places of the Crucible there are machines and tech to be scavenged and repurposed. Most civilizations will eventually succumb to the wild, after all.

ARCHONS

The minds of the animals present a unique test of an archon's vaunted ability to communicate with any denizen of the Crucible. Some are drawn to the uncomplicated thought patterns of the Untamed, considering them a calming influence and a source of comfort. Other archons are drawn to the sense of wild and natural freedom these creatures exhibit. For the most part, the Untamed beasts are happy to ignore anything that is neither predator nor prey, but some particularly social animals (and people) enjoy the undemanding company of an archon during their travels.

ON RADIANT WINGS

by Daniel Lovat Clark

He felt the Vault's presence like a chord that thrummed music throughout his body. Not that he had a body, exactly, not like the humans and the cyborgs and the creatures who followed him. In that way, at least, he felt a closer kinship to the ethereal spirits of Sanctum, but their wispy forms of pure psyche, bound as they were in heavy suits of knightly armor, were still more limited than him.

He could become anything. He knew that, felt that, deep inside. But becoming that anything–it was out of reach until he opened the Vault. Some part of himself was still locked away, waiting for him to find it. He could be anything, even wear a body for a time, but he couldn't be, fully, until he was whole.

Argus pulled himself inward, fell back into the body-shape he wore most often, radiant wings fluttering behind, white robes billowing around a form held together by gleaming energy. It was an impressive look, and the reason they called him Radiant Argus the Supreme. He stepped forward, to where Sergeant Zakiel knelt with his dimmed aura. "Rise," Argus said, his voice thrumming through mind as much as air.

"There is another Archon near the Vault, sire," said Zakiel, falling into step alongside his Archon. Together, they walked past the remains of an ancient structure, plated in gold dataweave, part temple, part computer. Argus had been studying the ruin when he felt the Vault's call, had

determined that it had stood when this part of the world had been added to the Crucible. Its makers were a mystery; perhaps they had not come along with their temple when the Architects brought it here.

Zakiel, blind to these mysteries, continued speaking. "Miss 'Onyx' Censorius," he said. "She has her own cadre of warriors, demons, and thieves."

"A rival," said Argus. He felt the music of the Vault shift, the chord tauten within him. The greater the struggle to open a Vault, the greater the reward. Did the Vaults reveal themselves explicitly to provoke these challenges? Or did the rewards within shift in response to the difficulty the Archon who opened it faced? He didn't know. Who could guess the motives of the Architects? Perhaps that knowledge was locked in a Vault.

"We must act swiftly." He could feel her now, reaching out, a dark and dissonant presence. She was ahead of him, had already gathered Æmber for her first key. But if she opened the Vault, then that part of himself that was locked away would go to her instead. "Zakiel, find two of the batdrones and take to the sky. Strike down upon her coterie, while we gather the Æmber in this valley."

"It's to be battle, then, my liege?" Zakiel asked, his aura flaring and his wings flickering into existence.

"It's always battle," Argus said, looking toward the Vault. Its song grew louder still. "How else are we to forge our perfect selves in the Crucible?"

THE ORIGIN OF KEYFORGE

In the early days of trading card games, they were played in many ways – and some of my favorite ways disappeared over time. Among those were sealed deck and league play. Both were awkward to manage because cards had a tendency to get lost in one's collection. Also, players could only play with trusted friends because it was easy to cheat by improving one's deck surreptitiously.

I have often wondered if I could get back some of that really exciting play, which was characterized by tools that weren't universal. Each player had treasures no other player had, but also had less powerful cards that needed to be used in clever ways to get the most value. One's sealed or league deck was never ideal – but it was unique, and there was a great deal of skill in getting the most out of it.

While I enjoy constructing or drafting decks, I am often longing to play cards that are not powerful enough to compete within these formats. When playing with sealed or limited decks, these cards often become viable, since you can't just replace them with top tier cards. I find special pleasure in winning a game using cards that many people ignored or overlooked.

I have always been attached to good procedurally generated content. Game worlds generated in this way really feel as if they belong to me, the player – I am discovering them as I play; the designer didn't even know they existed. Often games without such content are extremely managed experiences; everyone goes through the same story lines and can experience the same gameplay by making the same decisions. Everything they experience feels planned. The contrast feels to me like the difference between exploring a jungle and walking in an amusement park. When trading card games first came out the feeling was like exploring a jungle – and as the cards became more like commodities, it became more and more like an amusement park.

In the amusement park there are experts telling you how to play the game, the safest strategies, what net decks to use. In the jungle you have the tools you have. There is every chance that you are going to be the best in the world at playing your decks - you can't just look up what the synergies are or the weaknesses; you will only find out by playing.

Welcome to the jungle!

Richard Garfield
April 2018

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ERRATA

This section contains the official errata that have been made to individual cards in *KeyForge*. Errata overides the printed information on the card it applies to.

Library Access (COTA 115)

Should read: "**Play**: For the remainder of the turn, each time you play another card, draw a card. Purge Library Access."

Biomatrix Backup (COTA 208)

Should read: "This creature gains,"**Destroyed**: Put this creature into its owner's archives.""

Bait and Switch (COTA 267)

Should read: "**Play**: If your opponent has more ⬦ than you, steal 1⬦. Repeat the preceding effect if your opponent still has more ⬦ than you."

Drummernaut (AOA 006)

Should read: "**Play/Fight/Reap**: Return another friendly Giant creature to your hand."

Magda the Rat (COTA 303)

Should read: "Elusive. **Play**: Steal 2⬦. If Magda the Rat leaves play, your opponent steals 2⬦."

Yzphyz Knowdrone (AOA 210)

Should read: "**Play**: Archive a card. You may purge an archived card. If you do, stun a creature."

Life for a Life (AOA 273)

Should read: "**Play**: Sacrifice a creature. If you do, deal 6✳ to a creature."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section provides answers to a number of common questions that are asked about the game. These questions are presented in a "Question and Answer" format, with the newest questions at the end.

My opponent has 14 Æmber in their pool and I have 0 in mine. At the start of my turn I select Shadows as the active house and play the card Bait and Switch (CoTA 267). How many times does Bait and Switch trigger?

In this situation, Bait and Switch's effect will be triggered 2 times. When the effect is triggered for the first time time it checks if your opponent has more Æmber than you, and if they do it will repeat the first effect again, stealing another Æmber. However, since the card says to repeat the preceding effect and not the whole effect it can only ever trigger twice.

Its the first turn of the game and I am going first. I choose house Logos to be the active house and play the card Phase Shift (CoTA 117). Does this allow me to play another card this turn even though the First Turn Rule (see page 5) is in effect?

Playing Phase Shift will allow you to play another card from your hand this turn, since the First Turn Rule can be modified by card effects.

Its the first turn of the game and I am going first. I choose house Logos to be the active house and play the card Wild Wormhole (CoTA 125). Can Wild Wormhole's effect be resolved even though the First Turn Rule (see page 5) is in effect?

Wild Wormhole's effect can be resolved. The First Turn Rule specifies that players cannot play or discard more than one card from their hand. However it does not prohibit cards from being played or discarded from other game areas, such as your deck.

I have 2 chains and 7 cards in hand when moving to my draw cards step. Will I shed a chain during this step?

No, you will not shed a chain during this draw cards step. Chains are only shed when a player would draw cards during the draw step and the chains prevent them from doing so (see "Chains" on Page 8). Since you already have 7 cards in your hand, you aren't going to be drawing any cards, and thus don't lose any of your chains.

I have 2 chains and 5 cards in hand when moving to my draw cards step. Will I shed a chain during this step?

Yes, you will shed a chain during this step. Chains are only shed when a player would draw cards during the draw step and the chains prevent them from doing so (see "Chains" on Page 8). You only have 5 cards in hand, and normally you would draw a card to refill your hand. However because of the chains you are prevented from drawing that card. Since you would normally have drawn the card and the chain prevented it, you then shed 1 chain.

I have chosen house Logos to be my active house this turn and start off by playing Library Access (CoTA 115), I then play Wild Wormhole (CoTA 125). In what order do I resolve this combination of effects?

When you play a Wild Wormhole after playing a Library Access the following happens in this order:

1. You gain 1 Æmber from Wild Wormhole's Æmber bonus.
2. Library Access's effect and Wild Wormhole's play effect are simultaneous, so you may resolve them in either order.
3. You gain Æmber from any Æmber bonus on the card played from the top of your deck.
4. If there are any play effects on the card played from the top of your deck, they are simultaneous with Library Access's effect. You may resolve them in either order.

I have the card Pitlord (CoTA 093) in play and my opponent plays the card Restringuntus (CoTA 094) and chooses house Dis. What happens when I try to declare my house on my next turn?

On your next turn, during the choose a house step, you will be in a position where you must choose house Dis (because of the Pitlord), but also cannot choose house Dis (because of the Restringuntus). Cannot effects have precedence over must effects, thus you cannot choose Dis. (see "Cannot Vs Must" on Page 9.) You may still choose either one of your other houses though.

I have a Faygin (CoTA 300) in play and my opponent has an Urchin (CoTA 315) in play. I reap with Faygin and with its reap effect I choose my opponent's Urchin. What happens?

Faygin's effect causes the Urchin to try and go into your hand, however when a card leaves play it always goes to its owner's corresponding out of play zone (See "Leaves Play" on Page 11) unless the card causing it to leave play specifies otherwise. The Urchin is returned to your opponent's hand instead of yours.

I have 0 Æmber in my Æmber pool and have chosen house Logos to be my active house this turn. I play Wild Wormhole (CoTA 125) and try and play the top card of my deck is Kelifi Dragon (CoTA 037). What happens?

The Kelifi Dragon is returned to the top of the deck. Kelifi Dragon has a play requirement of needing to have 7 Æmber in your Æmber pool, and since you didn't have any initially (you now have 1 from

playing the Wild Wormhole) you don't have enough to be able to play the Kelifi Dragon. Since you can't play the card it is returned to the place you tried to play it from, in this case the top of the deck.

On my opponent's turn they use their Yxilo Bolter (CoTA 204) to reap and choose to resolve its reap effect on my Bad Penny (CoTA 296). Is the Bad Penny purged or does it end up back in my hand?

The Bad Penny goes back to your hand. "**Destroyed**:" effects (see "Destroyed" on Page 10) happen immediately before a creature is destroyed, meaning that Bad Penny is back in its owner's hand before the Yxilo Bolter can try to purge it with its reap effect. At that point, any pending effects waiting to resolve on Bad Penny no longer do. This is because Bad Penny is moving to an out-of-play zone in which the identity of cards is hidden from the opponent (see "Leaves Play" on Page 11).

I have a stunned creature in my battleline, play the card Anger (CoTA 001), and choose to resolve its effect on that stunned creature. What happens?

If a card (such as Anger in this case) allows you to use a creature and if the creature you are trying to use is stunned, you remove the stun instead of doing anything else. Since Fighting is a type of being used the creature is exhausted and the stun counter is removed.

This will even work if your opponent has no creatures in play, because unstunning replaces the normal "use" (in this case fight) of the card before it begins.

I have chosen house Logos to be my active house this turn and play a Phase Shift (COTA 117) then play another copy of Phase Shift. How many non-Logos cards can I play this turn?

You can play two non-Logos cards this turn. Each copy of Phase Shift that you play allows you to play an additional non-Logos card.

I have a Stealer of Souls (CoTA 098) in play and my opponent has a Valdr (CoTA 029). I use my Stealer of Souls to fight Valdr and both creatures are destroyed. Does the Stealer of Souls' ability trigger?

No, the Stealer of Souls' ability will not trigger. In order for the Stealer of Souls ability to trigger it must be in play, so if both the Stealer of Souls and the creature it is fighting die, they die simultaneously and the Stealer of Souls ability cannot trigger (see "Destroyed" on Page 10).

I have a Combat Pheromones (CoTA 180), "John Smyth" (CoTA 195), and Mindwarper (CoTA 196) in play. I sacrifice the Combat Pheromones and reap with the Mindwarper, and then reap with "John Smyth" and use "John Smyth's" reap effect to ready the Mindwarper. Can I use the Mindwarper again?

Yes, Combat Pheromones is granting permission to use a creature during that turn. If you have an effect that readies one of the Mars cards affected by the Combat Pheromones (Such as "John Smyth"), you will be able to use that card again.

I play King of the Crag (CoTA 038) while my opponent has a Looter Goblin (CoTA 041) in play. What happens?

The rules for damage state that "If a creature has as much or more damage on it as it has power, the creature is destroyed and placed on top of its owner's discard pile." When a creature has 0 power, if it has 0 damage on it, it is destroyed.

My opponent has a Banner of Battle (CoTA 020) in play. Can I play the card Poltergeist (CoTA 069) to destroy the Banner of Battle, even if the artifact can't be used?

Yes, you can resolve the effect of Poltergeist on any artifact in play even

if the artifact cannot be used. You just resolve as much of the card effect as you can (see "Resolve As Much As You Can" on Page 7), and to resolve this situation you just destroy the artifact.

I have no creatures in play and my opponent has two. Can I play the card Lost in the Woods (CoTA 327) even though I don't have two creatures in play?

Yes you can. The "Resolve As Much As You Can" rule (see Page 7) says that you resolve as much of a card effect as possible and any part of a card you cannot resolve is ignored. In the context of Lost in the Woods, it means that you shuffle in as many of the creatures as you can. So in the case that your opponent has two or more creatures in their battleline and you have none, you will shuffle in two enemy creatures and no friendly creatures.

I have an exhausted Bumpsy (CoTA 030) in play and my opponent has no creatures in their battleline. I play the card Anger (CoTA 001) and choose to resolve it on Bumpsy. What happens?

The Bumpsy will be readied by the effect of Anger, but since there are no enemy creatures in play it cannot be used to fight so it stays ready. The creature can then be used as per the standard rules.

I control a Spangler Box (CoTA 132) that has purged my own Kelifi Dragon (CoTA 037). The Spangler Box is returned to its owner's hand with Grasping Vines (CoTA 324), but I don't have any Æmber. Do I get my Kelifi Dragon back?

Yes. The Kelifi Dragon is not being played when it is returned by the Spangler Box, it is being put into play. Being put into play bypasses the normal play restrictions, meaning that the Kelifi Dragon is put back into play no matter how much Æmber you have.

I play Smaaash (CoTA 046), but each of my opponent's creatures is already stunned. Do I have to resolve the effect against Smaaash itself?

No. You may still choose to resolve Smaaash's "**Play**:" effect against one of your opponent's creatures, however you cannot put a stun counter on an already stunned creature so nothing will happen.

My opponent puts two of my creatures into their archives using the card Sample Collection (CoTA 175). On my next turn I play the card Dysania (CoTA 141). What happens?

Playing the Dysania will cause each of your opponent's archived cards to be discarded, however since the Sample Collection states that when these creatures leave the archives they are put into their owner's hand instead these cards are returned to your hand. Since these cards were not discarded by Dysania's effect, you will not gain any Æmber from the resolution of that effect.

I have Shadow Self (CoTA 310) with a Raiding Knight (CoTA 255) as a neighbor. My Raiding Knight is then attacked by a 4 power creature. How much damage does each creature take in this situation?

In this case, the Shadow Self will take 2 damage, the Raiding Knight will take no damage, and the 4 power creature will take 4 damage and be destroyed. This happens because before the damage can be dealt to the Raiding Knight, two of it is prevented by its armor. Then when the damage is actually being dealt, the damage that would be dealt to the Raiding Knight is dealt to the Shadow Self instead. At the same time as the Shadow Self is being dealt damage, the 4 power creature takes 4 damage from the Raiding Knight's power.

I have a maverick Pitlord (CoTA 093) in play in a deck without house Dis. Am I forced to choose house Dis as my active house?

No. You cannot choose an active house unless it is on your identity card or you control a card of that house. This restriction overrides Pitlord's effect, allowing you to choose any of your houses as your active house.

What happens if I use Spectral Tunneler (CoTA 133) on a non-flank creature (causing it to be considered a flank creature), then play Positron Bolt (CoTA 118) on that creature?

Positron Bolt will deal 3 damage to that creature. You will choose one of that creature's neighbors to deal 2 damage to, and then deal 1 damage to the other neighbor of that second creature.

If I use Gabos Longarms (CoTA 86) to attack a creature without elusive, can I use Gabos's "Before Fight" ability to deal damage to an elusive creature instead, or will the elusive keyword prevent the damage?

Gabos Longarms can deal damage to an elusive creature using its ability. The elusive ability prevents damage only when the creature is attacked—because Gabos is not actually attacking the elusive creature, the elusive keyword will not protect it.

What happens if I use Replicator (CoTA 150) to trigger the reap effect of an opponent's Sanctum Guardian (CoTA 256)?

Sanctum Guardian's reap effect will do nothing. A creature cannot be moved from one player's battleline to the other player's battleline except by effects that explicitly change control of that creature.

If I play Mimicry (CoTA 328) as a copy of an action card in my opponent's discard pile, which card does the Rule of Six apply to?

For the purposes of the Rule of Six, you are considered to have played the copied card.

I have Grasping Vines (CoTA 324) under Masterplan (CoTA 288). If I use Masterplan's "Omni" effect to play Grasping Vines, can I return Masterplan to my hand before it is sacrificed?

Yes. Masterplan's effect allows you to play the card beneath it before sacrificing Masterplan. Masterplan is still in play at the time you play Grasping Vines, and therefore can be returned to your hand using Grasping Vines's effect.

If Duma the Martyr (CoTA 242) and another of my creatures are both destroyed by a damage effect like Poison Wave (CoTA 280), can Duma the Martyr save my other creature from destruction?

No. If the damage causes Duma the Martyr and your other creature to both be tagged for destruction, healing that creature afterwards will not prevent its destruction.

If a card like Gateway to Dis (CoTA 59) destroys multiple creatures and Tolas (CoTA 103) is one of those creatures, does anyone gain Æmber off of Tolas' ability?

No. Tolas' ability does not trigger until cards are actually put into discard piles, at which point Tolas is already destroyed.

If I have out a Tolas (CoTA 103) when my Bad Penny (CoTA 296) is destroyed, do I gain Æmber even if Bad Penny goes to my hand instead of my discard pile?

Yes. Cards still count as being destroyed even if their "Destroyed:" effect moves them out of play.

I use my Hallowed Shield (AoA 218) to protect my Maruck the Marked (AoA 220) from damage and then I attack my opponent's 3-power creature. Do I capture an Æmber with Maruck's ability?

No. Protection effects like Hallowed Shield prevent damage before armor. Maruck still has 1 armor left after the fight.

If my Jargoggle (AoA 131) is destroyed on my turn and its "Destroyed:" ability lets me play a card with Omega, can I still play cards afterwards?

Not usually. If Jargoggle was destroyed during your Step 3 you may not play or use any more cards—just finish triggering any more triggered effects and then move on to the next step. If Jargoggle was destroyed during your Step 1, however (for example, because you forged a key while Strange Gizmo (CoTA 134) was out), you only move on to Step 2, where you may then choose your house and move on to Step 3, where you are allowed to play and use cards again as normal.

I have Pingle Who Annoys (CoTA 43) and my opponent plays King of the Crag (CoTA 38). Will King of the Crag take a damage before Pingle is destroyed?

No. Because King of the Crag's ability is a constant, its effect applies as long as it's in play and destroys Pingle before Pingle's "after it enters play" effect can trigger.

If I have a 2-power creature with a Soulkeeper (AoA 83) attached, my opponent has a 6-power creature and a 5-power creature, and I play Opal Knight (AoA 260), do both of my opponent's creatures die, or just the 6-power one?

Just the 6-power one. Since Soulkeeper's effect triggers before the destroyed creatures actually leave play, it will target the 6-power creature for destruction even though that creature is already tagged for destruction.

I have 2 Æmber in my pool and I reap with a creature. My opponent has 2 Sir Marrows (AoA 223) in play. Do both Sir Marrows capture an Æmber, and if so, where does the second one come from?

Sir Marrows can only capture the 1 Æmber that was just gained from reaping. The active player determines which Sir Marrows captures the Æmber.

A Scowly Caper (AoA 313) that I own and my opponent controls is purged with Spangler Box (CoTA 132). Later, the Spangler Box is destroyed. When Scowly Caper returns to play, whose control will he be under?

When the Spangler Box returns Scowly Caper to play, this counts as "entering play" again, so Scowly Caper's ability again causes you put it into play under your opponent's control.

I play the card Sack of Coins (AoA 312) with 3 Æmber in my pool. Can I divide the 3 damage among multiple creatures?

Yes. Because Sack of Coins deals 1 damage "for each" Æmber in your pool, each point of damage may be assigned to a different creature.

I play the card Nerve Blast (CoTA 276) while my opponent has 2 Æmber in their pool and controls a Po's Pixies (AoA 362). Am I able to deal 2 damage with Nerve Blast's effect?

Yes. Po's Pixies has a replacement effect that changes where the stolen Æmber is taken from (the common supply instead of its controller's pool). However, that Æmber is still considered to be "stolen," and therefore the "if you do" condition of Nerve Blast has been satisfied.

I reap with Nexus (CoTA 305), which allows me to use an opponent's artifact "as if it were" mine. I choose to use my opponent's Shard of Greed (AoA 315), which lets me gain 1 Æmber "for each friendly Shard." Shard of Greed is the only Shard in play. How much Æmber do I gain?

1. You are using Shard of Greed as if it were yours, so Shard of Greed counts itself as a friendly Shard for the purposes of its ability.

I reap with Nexus (CoTA 305), and use my opponent's Spectral Tunneler (CoTA 133) to give Nexus the ability "Reap: Draw a card." Can I then trigger that "Reap" ability?

Yes. You are still at the timing point to trigger Nexus's "Reap" abilities, so it can now trigger the ability granted by Spectral Tunneler.

I reap with Replicator (CoTA 150), and use its ability to trigger the reap effect of my opponent's Sequis (CoTA 257) as if I controlled it. Which player's pool does Sequis capture Æmber from?

Sequis captures 1 Æmber from your opponent's pool. You are using Sequis as if you controlled it, so the default capture rules cause the Æmber to be captured from your opponent's pool.

My opponent has Sir Marrows (AoA 223) in play. If I play Dimension Door (CoTA 108) and then reap with a creature, does Sir Marrows capture the Æmber from the creature reaping?

No, in this case the effect of gaining the Æmber from reaping is being replaced by stealing Æmber from your opponent. This means that you aren't getting Æmber directly from the reap and your opponent's Sir Marrows will not be able to capture it.

My opponent forges two keys on their turn. On my next turn, I play Key Hammer (CoTA 66). What happens?

Key Hammer only affects a single key. You will choose one of the two keys your opponent forged on their previous turn and unforge it.

I choose Logos as my active house. I play Phase Shift (CoTA 117), then play a Mimicry (CoTA 328) as a copy of Foggify (CoTA 110). Can I still play another non-Logos card using Phase Shift's effect?

No. Phase Shift grants you permission to play 1 non-Logos card this turn. Playing Mimicry uses up this effect, as you would not have been able to play Mimicry without Phase Shift's effect

Can I play Mimicry (CoTA 328) as a copy of Eureka (AoA 128) if I have already played another card this turn?

No. If Mimicry is played as a copy of Eureka, it will have the alpha keyword. Since you have already played another card this turn, you are not able to play an alpha card this turn and so the Mimicry will not be played and will go back to your hand instead.

Can I play Mimicry (CoTA 328) as a copy of Eureka (AoA 128) as the first thing I do during step 3 of my turn?

Yes. Mimicry is being played as a copy of Eureka and will have the Alpha keyword. Since you haven't done anything else (played a card, discarded a card, or used a card) this turn you can still play the alpha card.

My opponent has 10 Æmber and is about to forge their second key. I play Interdimensional Graft (CoTA 112). My opponent has Forgemaster Og (AoA 38) in play. On their turn they forge a key for 6 Æmber. What happens to their remaining 4 Æmber?

The effect of Interdimensional Graft and Forgemaster Og both occur at the same time step (after the key is forged), so the active player (your opponent) chooses which to resolve first.

My Gabos Longarms (CoTA 86) attacks my opponent's Æmber Imp (AoA 53). Is Gabos Longarms' damage prevented by Elusive, or can I deal that damage to another creature?

You may still deal Gabos Longarms' damage to another creature. Elusive only prevents damage dealt to the creature with the elusive ability during the fight.

My opponent plays Shadow of Dis (AoA 103), forcing me to treat my creatures' text boxes as if they were blank until their next turn. I play Silvertooth (CoTA 311). Does Silvertooth enter play ready?

Yes. Shadow of Dis only affects creatures while they are in play. Silvertooth's ability modifies how it enters play, so it is in effect before the Shadow of Dis effect applies to it.

My opponent plays Shadow of Dis (AoA 103). I have two copies of Glimmer (AoA 323) in my hand. May I play them both?

No. Alpha is a play restriction that is active while in your hand before playing the card. After you have played a card in a step, you may not play an Alpha card even if its text box will be considered blank once it is in play.

My opponent plays Shadow of Dis (AoA 103). I have a Duskwitch (AoA 320) in my hand. May I play Duskwitch, then play other cards afterwards?

Yes, you can continue to play, use, and discard cards after playing Duskwitch. Omega is an effect that occurs after a card is played. By that point, Duskwitch is in play and under the effect of Shadow of Dis, meaning it no longer has the Omega ability.

I have a Ronnie Wristclocks (AoA 276) next to a Little Niff (AoA 289). I attack one of my opponent's creatures with Ronnie Wristclocks, but he is destroyed during the fight. Does Little Niff's ability still allow me to steal 1 Æmber?

Yes. Little Niff's neighbor does not need to survive in order for Little Niff to steal the Æmber.

My opponent has two creatures in play and I have none. I play Neutron Shark (CoTA 146) and use its play effect to destroy an enemy creature as well as the Neutron Shark. If the top card of my deck does not belong to house Logos, can I repeat Neutron Shark's ability and destroy my opponent's other creature?

No. The destruction of Neutron Shark and the first enemy creature resolves fully before you proceed with the rest of Neutron Shark's ability. Because Neutron Shark is no longer in play, its Play/Fight/Reap ability is no longer active and cannot be triggered again.

When does the ability of the Encounter Suit (WC 330) trigger?

Encounter Suit's ability occurs after an action card is played and its Æmber bonus is resolved, at the same timing point as other effects that occur "after" an action card is played. However, the active player must trigger Encounter Suit's effect before triggering the "**Play:**" effect on that action card.

KEYFORGE TIMING CHART

Text in *black* indicates game steps and text in RED lists common card effects and exactly when they happen.

Whenever two or more effects occur at the same time step on this chart, the order that those effects resolve in is determined by the active player. **Note**: Effects that use the term "each time" occur at the same timing point as effects that use the term "after."

This chart provides a detailed timing structure for all standard game steps and a number of frequently used card abilities. Use this information to determine the proper sequence of card abilities and game steps.

1 FORGE A KEY

» "START OF TURN" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

1. Check to see if you are able to forge a key.

2. If able, spend Æmber equal to the current forging cost and forge a key. If you forge your 3rd key, you immediately win the game.

» "AFTER A KEY IS FORGED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

2 CHOOSE A HOUSE

1. Choose which house will be the active house for this turn.

» "AFTER YOU CHOOSE A HOUSE" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

2. You may take all the cards from your archives and put them in your hand.

3 PLAY, DISCARD, OR USE CARDS

You may perform these actions in any order and repeat them any number of times.

▶ PLAY A CARD.

1. If your card is a creature, artifact or upgrade, put it into play. If your card is an action, reveal it (after you play it, discard it).

2. Resolve the Æmber bonus on your card.

» "PLAY:" EFFECTS AND "AFTER PLAY/ENTERS PLAY" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

▶ USE A CREATURE TO FIGHT.

1. Exhaust the attacking creature and choose the creature they are fighting.

» "BEFORE FIGHT", HAZARDOUS X, AND ASSAULT X TRIGGER.

2. Creatures deal their damage to each other simultaneously.

» "FIGHT:" EFFECTS, "AFTER A CREATURE FIGHTS" EFFECTS, AND "AFTER A CREATURE IS USED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

▶ USE A CREATURE TO REAP.

1. Exhaust the reaping creature.

2. Gain 1 Æmber.

» "REAP:" EFFECTS, "AFTER A CREATURE REAPS" EFFECTS, AND "AFTER A CREATURE IS USED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

▶ USE AN ACTION OR OMNI ABILITY.

1. Exhaust your creature or artifact with the "**Action:**" or "**Omni:**" ability.

2. Resolve the effects of that ability.

» "AFTER A CREATURE IS USED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

4 READY CARDS

1. Ready each of your exhausted cards.

5 DRAW CARDS

1. Draw cards until you have six or more in your hand (adjusting for chains or card effects).

» "END OF TURN" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

▶ DAMAGE

The following steps occur each time damage is dealt to one or more creatures:

1. *Apply effects that prevent damage.*

2. *Use ward to prevent damage.*

3. *Use armor to prevent damage.*

4. *Deal all remaining damage. Creatures with damage equal to or greater than their power on them are tagged for destruction.*

▶ DESTROYED

The following steps occur each time one or more cards would be destroyed:

1. *Cards are tagged for destruction.*

» "DESTROYED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.

2. *Each destroyed card is put into its owner's discard pile. (The battleline immediately shifts to fill in each destroyed creature's place.)*

» "AFTER A CREATURE IS DESTROYED" EFFECTS TRIGGER.